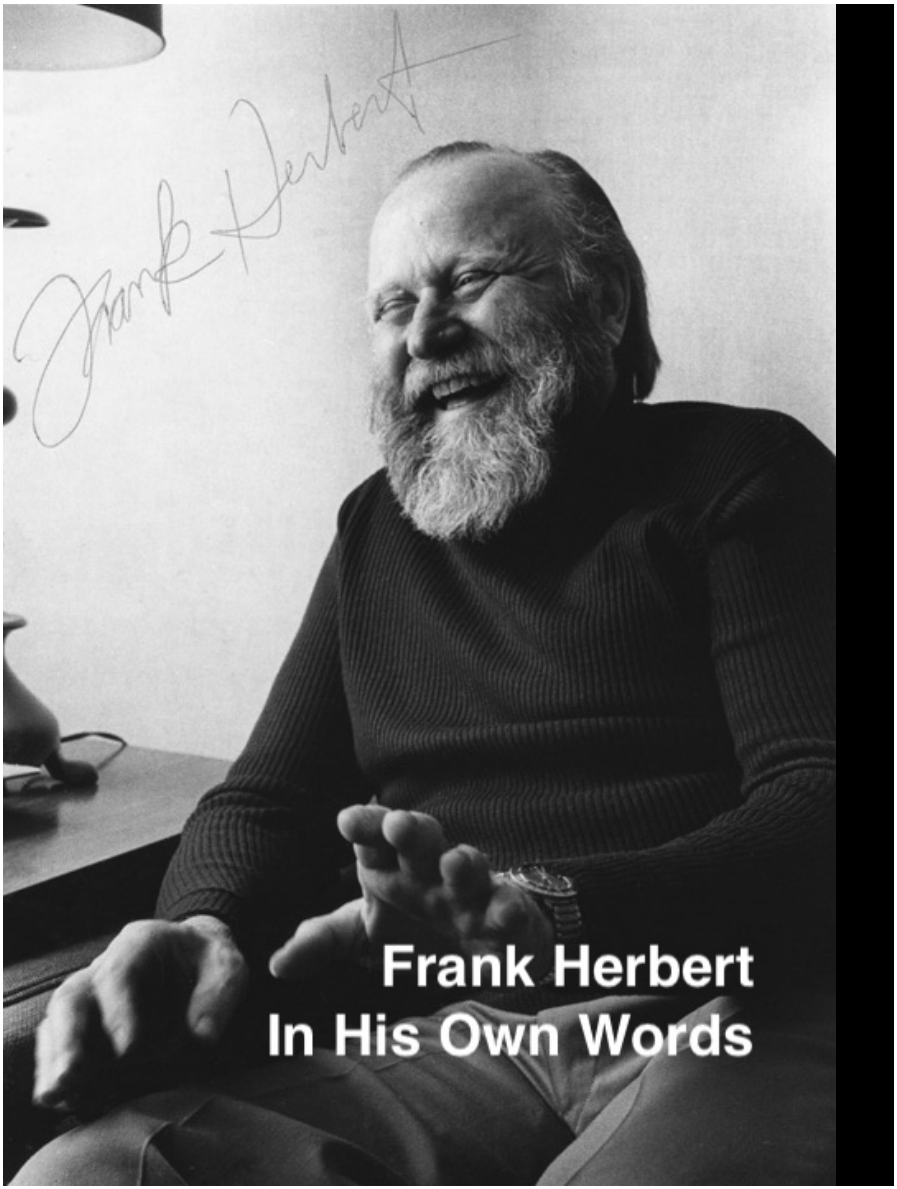
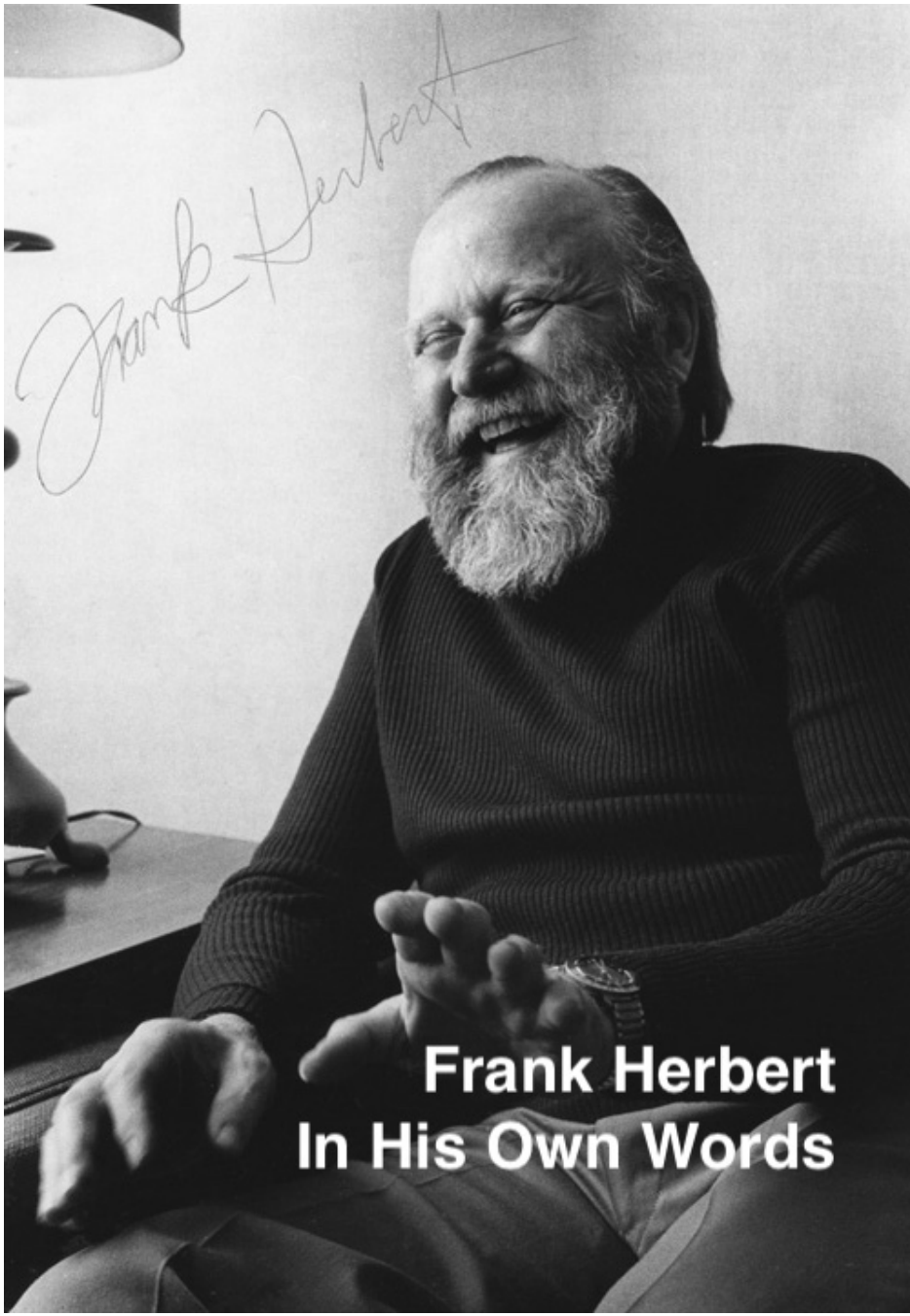

Frank Herbert
In His Own Words


Frank Herbert
In His Own Words

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Frank Herbert
In His Own Words

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Introduction

During the summer holidays of 2016, I became obsessed.
I decided to reread *Dune* after a pause of a few decades, and it sucked me in just like it did when I was a teenager. After I emerged on the other side, I wanted to know what there is to learn about Dune. What were Frank Herbert's inspirations? What thoughts went into the book? How did he manage to create such a dense and rich world?
Thus, I went searching for clues online. I found a few forums and websites where die-hard fans listed old interviews and shared links and scans. So I started hunting and gathering and tumbled deeper down the rabbit hole.

However, as the reading experience of these scans was suboptimal, I decided to read them more nicely. "I will *just* OCR and proofread them, and convert them into an ebook and put it on my e-reader," I thought.

During the daytime, I collected interviews and supporting material; at night, I scanned, edited, and turned them into an ebook. In the morning, I proofread, marked things to be changed, and continued my search. After the online source ran dry, I ordered a few out-of-print, second-hand books and magazines to complete the picture.

Eventually, I had a solid body of articles and was content with what I learned. The ebook was almost done – only a few articles needed scanning, and the whole book had a consistent layout – but the content was pretty solid. Then, I stored it away for a few years. I

visited it now and then and decided in 2025 that its content should be shared. And here we are…

The articles are sorted chronologically, beginning with the famous (and complete) Willis E. McNelly interview, which is also a great starting point. I focused on interviews about the novels. I skipped articles/interviews about the Lynch movie—well, with two exceptions: the Waldenbook tapes, where both Lynch and Herbert talk, and an article written by Neil Gaiman.

As I said, the material is scanned and transcribed (by me or others), so mistakes might have crept in, even though I re-read everything numerous times. Also, I did not try to find out if any of the more than 40-year-old material is (still) copyrighted. If you hold ownership of any of these texts, I hope you approve, as this is a labor of love and supposed to be a free and open source of knowledge and insight. If not, please reach out.

This ebook is provided without any warranty. I hope you find its content as inspiring as I did and do…

I.

P.S. If you want to contact me, use this email.

Timeline

1920 - Frank Herbert was born on October 8th in Tacoma, Washington.

1938 - Graduates high school. At age 19, FH moves to Southern California and, lying about his age, gets a job with the *Glendale Star*, thus beginning a career as a journalist on the West Coast newspapers that lasts for many years.

1940 - Marries Flora Parkinson in San Pedro, California. (divorced 1945)

1941 - Enlists in the US Navy and joins the Seabees, but is released six months later on a medical discharge.

1942 - Daughter, Penny, born 16 February in San Pedro.

1945 - Publishes first fiction under his own name, *The Survival of the Cunning* (a war story set in the Arctic), in *Esquire* magazine.

1946 - Attends University of Washington. Marries Beverly Ann Stuart on 20 June in Seattle.

1947 - Son, Brian Patrick, born 29 June in Seattle, Washington.

1951 - Son, Bruce Calvin, born 26 June in Santa Rosa, California.

1952 - Publishes first science fiction short story, Looking for

Something, in Startling Stories.

1956 - Publishes first science fiction novel, Under Pressure (aka: *The Dragon in the Sea*).

1964 - *Dune World* serialized in Analog Magazine, December 1963, January, and February 1964.

1965 - *The Prophet of Dune* serialised in *Analog*, January-May 1965. Dune published, wins Nebula Award.

1966 - The Green Brain, Destination: Void, Eyes of Heisenberg. *Dune* win Hugo Award.

1968 - The Heaven Makers. The Santaroga Barrier.

1969 - Dune Messiah.

1970 - Whipping Star. Begins lectures at the University of Washington on general and interdisciplinary studies.

1971 - The Worlds of Frank Herbert (short story collection).

1972 - The Godmakers. Soul Catcher. Ends his newspaper career. Retreats to a six acre farm on Washington's Olympic Peninsula where he divides his time between writing fiction and transforming the acreage into an ecological demonstration project.

1973 - The Book of Frank Herbert (short story collection). Hellstrom's Hive.

1974 - Jean-Paul Gibon purchases the film rights for 10 years with director Alejandro Jodorowsky.

1976 - Children of Dune.

1977 - *Children of Dune* nominated Hugo Award for Best Novel. The Dosadi Experiment.

1979 - The Jesus Incident (with Bill Ransom), Jodorowsky shut down the production of his movie

1980 - Without Me You're Nothing: The Essential Guide to Home Computers (with Max Barnard).

1981 - God Emperor of Dune.

1982 - The White Plague, Dino De Laurentiis purchases the film rights to *Dune*.

1983 - The Lazarus Effect (with Bill Ransom).

1984 - Heretics of Dune. David Lynch's Dune is released, FH's wife of 38 years, Bev, dies of cancer after a ten-year fight with the disease.

1985 - Chapterhouse: Dune. Marries his former Putnam representative, Theresa Shackleford. Eye (short story collection - includes The Road to Dune).

1986 - Dies February 11th at age 65, of a massive pulmonary embolism while recuperating from cancer surgery. Man of Two Worlds (with Brian Herbert).

1988 - The Ascension Factor (completed by Bill Ransom).

Interviews

The Willis E. McNelly Interview, 1969

Note: Professor Willis E. McNelly recorded and typed an interview that he made with Frank Herbert and his wife Beverly Herbert, in 1969 and sent it to Turkey in 1997.

Interviewee: Frank Herbert (FH) and his wife, Beverly (BH)

Interviewer: Willis McNelly (WM)

WM: This tape recording is being made February 3rd 1969, in the home of Frank Herbert in Fairfax, California. Frank and his wife Bev are sitting around including myself, Dr. Willis E. McNelly of Cal. State English Department, Fullerton, California; sitting around, talking about science fiction. Frank Herbert, as you all know, is the author of *Dune* and many other science fiction novels.

Frank, I wonder if you'd tell us a little bit about the origins of *Dune*. You started a little earlier and you said you could trace the germinal idea.

FH: Oh yes. The idea came from an article (I was going to do an article, which I never did) about the control of sand dunes. What many people don't realize is that the United States has pioneered in this, how to control the flow of sand dunes, and it started up here at Florence, Oregon. There is a pilot project up there of the U.S. Forest Service which has been so successful that it has been visited and copied by experts, related departments from Chile, Israel, India, Pakistan, Great Britain, several other countries…

WM: Well, I know I drove along the Oregon coast this summer and you had mentioned this a year ago, that it had begun with this, what was happening along Oregon. I remember stopping at one fork there, right south of Columbia River, it is Oregon State Park now…

FH: That's, well, Florence is considerably south of that.

WM: South of it.

FH: Yes. It's about centrally located on the Oregon coast and it was an area where sand dune blew across Highway 1., U.S. Highway 1, frequently blocking the highway, and the forest service put in a test station down there to determine how they could control the flow of these sand dune. And I got fascinated by sand dunes, because I'm always fascinated by the idea of something that is either seen in miniature and the can be expanded to the macrocosm, or which, but

for the difference in time, in the flow rate, and the entropy rate, is similar to other features which we wouldn't think were similar. Like a river…

WM: How long ago was this, by the way?

FH: Oh, this was in '53. This was considerably…

WM: Fifteen years ago, more or less…

FH: Yes. It was a long time ago. Sand dunes are like waves in a large body of water; they just are slower. And the people treating them as fluid learn to control them.

WM: Fluid mechanics, in other words.

FH: That's it. Fluid mechanics, with sand. And the whole idea fascinated me, so I started researching sand dunes and of course from sand dunes it's a logical idea to go into a desert. The way I accumulated data is I start building file folders and before long I saw that I had far too much for an article and far too much for a story, for a short story. So, I didn't know really what I had but I had an enormous amount of data and avenues shooting off at all angles to gather more. And I was following them… I can't read the dictionary,

you know; I can't go look up a word…

WM: (Laughter)

FH: I get stopped by everything else on the opposite page. But… so, I started accumulating these file folders, which I'll show you later, and as a result, I finally saw that I had something enormously interesting going for me about the ecology of deserts, and it was, for a science fiction writer anyway, it was an easy step from that to think: What if I had an entire planet that was a desert? During my studies of deserts, of course, and previous studies of religions, we all know that many religions began in a desert atmosphere, so I decided to put the two together because I don't think that any one story should have any one thread. I build one a layer technique, and of course putting in religion and religious ideas you can play one against the other. Now this is… you see, I'm talking about surface now…

WM: That's right.

FH: I'm not talking about the way things are layered…

WM: …within the novel itself.

FH: That's right. Yes. The way character is developed for various reasons in the story… this is just the germ of the idea, but that's where it began.

WM: It began fifteen years ago, then. Well, what made you or at what point did you go from the sand dunes of Oregon and the ecological background there to the decision to utilize let's say the Arabian mystique as another counter notion or contrapuntal notion working within the novel?

FH: Well, of course, in studying sand dunes, you immediately get into not just the Arabian mystique but the Navaho mystique and the mystique of the Kalahari primitives and all…

WM: Kalahari primitives?

FH: Yes, the Kalahari desert, the black folk (people) of the Kalahari and how they utilize every drop of water. You can't just stop with the people who are living in this type of environment: you have to go on to how the environment works on the people and how they work on their environment. Just as… I mean, you could look at this thing on the Oregon Coast quite simply, if you wanted to, and say, yes, the sand was covering the highway, and that's bad, so…

WM: …so we plant certain grasses, and that stops the sand from

moving, and that's good.

FH: And that's the end of it, you see, that's the end of it. But if you start going into the mechanics of how the United States Forest Service set up this project and all of the internal politics undoubtedly that were involved… I only know part of them… but I do know enough of them to know there were quite a few more… Then you would probably have a story there, a "mainstream" type of story. But I got off on a different kick because of the science fiction angle and the emphasis on ecology. It's been my belief for a long time that man inflicts himself on his environment… that is, Western man.

WM: I think we can see that just looking around us: the simple thing of beer used to be packed in bottles, which eventually disintegrated, then it was packed in cans, and that took at a fifty-year half-life, and now it's packed in aluminum cans, and that, you know, lives for ever, and we're gradually corrupting…

FH: Unless it's in salt water…

WM: …yes, well, all right, but we're gradually corrupting our environment as a result of that kind of thing.

FH: Plastic is the thing that we… you know, Bev and I were up on the Washington coast last year and an area unspoiled, originally

very primitive area where the Makahs tribes lived, and so on, and even there, down among the driftwood logs on that primitive beach, that almost unspoiled beach, you frequently, much too frequently, come on these blue, orange, green, white plastic containers… Purex, Ivory soap…

BH: Coming on the tide…

FH: …and they're virtually indestructible. There they are, they float …

WM: Well, man is then, as you view him, a creature who ecologically is a destructive force, a divisive force.

FH: Well, we tend to think in Western culture… I'm talking about Western man, you realize that.

WM: Yes.

FH: We tend to think that we can overcome nature by a mathematical means; we accumulate enough data and we subdue it.

WM: And examine parameters of that data and subdue it.

FH: Yes. We subdue nature. This is a one-pointed vision of man, because if you really start looking at man, Western man, you'll see that you could cut him right down the middle and he's blind on that backside, you see.

WM: This is the point you made earlier, Bev, in talking around about the death of the planetary ecologist in *Dune* being a very touching spot, I think you said… a very moving…

BH: Well, I felt also it was a very significant point. A lot of the story swung around this: how the ecologist died. I thought it was very important that the planet killed the ecologist.

WM: Even though the planet… I mean, even though the ecologist was technically able to subdue anything within that…

BH: Well, there he lay dying…

WM: Dying, and…

BH: And understanding everything that was happening to him.

WM: Exactly.

BH: Much more than someone else dying in the desert would have. Complete understanding… I think it made it more horrible, the fact that he completely understood…

WM: That he knew what was happening to him and understood it and was technically capable of controlling it.

BH: He knew it had gotten him.

WM: Yes.

FH: This of course was done deliberately for that purpose… to turn… it's a turning point of the whole book, but… a pivot, you might say… and the very fact that Kynes, who is the Western man, in my original construction of the book, sees all of these things happening to him as mechanical things doesn't subtract from the fact that he is still a part of this system because it is observing him. He's lived out of rhythm with it and he got in the through of the wave and it tumbled on him.

WM: And we're polluting our atmosphere, we're polluting our rivers, we're polluting our beaches because we don't understand the principles of ecology, among other things.

FH: Well, ecology, as somebody said… and I use this… I don't recall… I'd like to contribute this, but I don't recall where I encountered it… I did read over two hundred books as background for this novel… somebody said that ecology is the science of understanding consequences.

WM: I remember that.

FH: Lovely expression! And of course we're… each of us, individually, is the product of everything that has happen to us, and this happened to me and hit me, and so I used it, because, as far as I was concerned, one of the purposes of this story was to delineate consequences of inflicting yourself upon a planet, upon your environment.

WM: So you have a number of forces, then, that are inflicting themselves upon the planet. You have the Fremen forces, you have the forces of the House of Atreides, do you pronounce it..?

FH: Atreides.

WM: Atreides. Parenthesis: I'd love to examine with you the possible implications of the House of Atreus in the Green legend there. End of parenthesis. And you have the off-planet forces of the Spacer's Guild and the entire Imperium also as being forces inflicting themselves on this planet.

FH: The name of the game is power, you see.

WM: Yes.

FH: It… as it is today; we play the game today with counters called money and we talk about laws of supply and demand and so on. There is a law of supply and demand as long as you only have one form of exchange, but once you start getting other media of exchange, such as force, then the law of supply and demand gets different beats on it, different rhythms.

WM: It may interest you to know that on of the… in fact, the major question on my final examination for my science fiction course this last… two weeks ago was the… asking the class to examine the effects of power in its various forms, abuses and uses in two of the major works read during the semester, and… you're mentioning power just now as being the name of the game as far as Arrakis is

concerned…

FH: Yes. You see, Western man has assumed that if you have… that all you need for any problem is enough force, power, and that there is no problem which won't submit to this approach, even the problem of our own ignorance.

WM: (Laughter)

FH: Which, you see, throws it out the window right there because it is an asinine assumption, and it is the basic fallacy of Western man's approach to living. Now, I'm not saying that we immediately drop this and adopt a vendetta…

WM: Although that might not be a bad idea.

FH: No, we need what I would call a science of wisdom.

WM: I think among the things that we need… and this is indicated to a certain extent in the novel… but, we need a clear distinction in our minds… the minds of Western man… between the ethical norm and the moral life. The moral life is subject to change, it is the law, etc. etc. etc., but the ethical norm are those things which we must do because they are the proper thing to do regardless of the law.

FH: They're an abstract.

WM: They're abstract… they are an abstract, and this conflict between the moral and the ethical norms we see obtaining in certain situations within *Dune*, as I recall… at least I could extrapolate…

FH: Yes, that's correct. But the moral norm, as I saw in *Dune*, was something that is imposed upon people by their environment.

WM: Yes.

FH: I mean, it's as fixed as how many wives a man in his culture might be might be able to support and thereby have, or what possessions he can carry from one stopping place to another, and how this would control the moral law, the… that we build up in society. We see it in our society, for example, out of our nomadic background and herdsman background…We see all kinds of moral injunctions which grew out of that and which we accept today logically… I'm not trying to denigrate them…

WM: Yes.

FH: But we can trace it this way. Now this is where moral law comes from. Ethical law takes a step in another direction, and it says that I, the thinking animal, see that the logical consequences of these moral actions are such and so and maybe I'd better modify the moral law slightly by a higher ethical law…

WM: I find this that in one of the… or some of the internal conflicts which are bothering Paul, that the ethical norm which he sees as being one of say absolute rightness as opposed with the law of moral necessity, and these are clashing in him… these are tensions that work within Paul which cause him, I think, to have a depth of characterisation that you don't normally find within the normal science fiction novel.

FH: You hit on, of course, the way the character of Paul was constructed. It was the conflict between absolutes and the necessity of the moment.

WM: Yes.

FH: And…

WM: It's almost an existential necessity, incidentally, as I caught it… as I read it.

FH: That's right; that's absolutely right. Absolutely.

WM: (Laughter) Gee, thanks!

FH: You see, this is an exercise in showing up, you might say, the fallacy of absolutism.

WM: Even to be absolute about being non absolute, because Paul is bothered with that very problem.

FH: That's right.

WM: How absolute can he be and yet… in his relationships with his subordinates; with Stilgar, for example, if he's too absolute, he loses… you know… he gains… how did you put it in the novel? …. He saw… He sees the loss of a friend and the gain of a worshipper, almost. I…

FH: He gains… he loses a friend and gains a worshipper.

WM: A worshipper. Yes; and this kind of conflict: if he's too absolute here and non absolute there or in the necessity… when the tribe tries to force upon Paul the apparent necessity for killing Stilgar and he has to talk the tribe out of one of their tribal rules in order…

FH: A moral…

WM: Yes, right.

FH: A moral rule.

WM: A moral rule.

FH: And you see how the moral rule was developed out of the necessities of their background.

WM: Yes. Exactly.

FH: And he was given them, then, an ethical rule.

WM: Yes, and yet this conflict is continual, within Paul, I think, and it makes, I think, for certain added dimensions in the novel that again the normal science fiction novel does not have. Well, you began this, then, in ’53, and you began doing research and filling file folders with facts and extrapolating to the sand dune planet. Tell me further about the writing process itself.

FH: Well, this was the first book where I really started carefully applying these ideas about the building of a rhythm within a story.

WM: Would you define this a little bit more for me, please?

FH: I will. I’ll be specific about it and I can use an analogy, which is familiar to both of us, in poetry, but it is used only as an analogy…

WM: OK.

FH: You know how you choose the word in a given poem to control the beat of a poem?

WM: Are you…

FH: The way…

WM: …familiar with Hopkins' poem, "The Windhover?" If not, I'll get it out for you later and show you how there is one word in there which absolutely controls the total poem.

FH: Yes; this happens in many poems.

WM: Many poems…

FH: Yes, and the poem that develops a certain fixed rhythm. Now, by changing the phraseology, placement of words, you can change that rhythm; you can slow it down, you can speed it up. Well, there is an analogous thing in prose. I think this is quite easily defensible, that length of sentence, number one: modifying clauses…

WM: Variety of sentence structure, right.

FH: Variety of sentence structure… all these things control the pace of controlled reading or controlled… controlled… silent reading or oral… and I work orally, because I think that the language was spoken long before it was written, and I think that unconsciously we

still accept it as an oral transmission.

WM: That's something I'm going to have to try with my classes… reading parts of *Dune* aloud to them. I've done this… I do this as a standard device when I teach Joyce or Yeats or Eliot… I read great gobs of it aloud, in parts.

FH: Well, this was done deliberately to control that oral pace by the length of sentence, by the variety of sentence, by the words in the sentence, whether long convoluted words or short chopping words…

WM: Anglo-Saxon.

FH: Anglo-Saxon as against Latin.

WM: Latin.

FH: I controlled the pace, so I have several rhythms built into the story deliberately: one is a long-term rhythm… and we'll get to the ending of the book in a minute. I… the ending is camp, high camp. Deliberately. And a number of people, interestingly, have seen it. I wanted to say…

WM: I found it sheer action, almost for the sake of action.

FH: Yes.

WM: And overly dramatic, maybe; and, you know, “in the future they will call us wives,” I said yeachch! almost. But you call it high camp. I hadn’t thought of it that way.

FH: Well, I wanted to turn the story around on itself, but in two very specific ways. And obviously you don’t limit the way it turns. If you do that…if you do one way that you know of..

WM: Sure…

FH: One, I was poking a little fun at the idea of the person who always sees things verbally and must write about them and record them, you know. The historicity of anything that happens, you see. You’re not living it, you’re recording it.

WM: Yes. This is what we’re doing right now.

FH: Yes. But we’re having a good…

WM (to BH): Say that again, please.

BH: The man who never sees anything except through his camera viewer. He sees the whole world, you see, in through that little square box.

FH: The view hunter.

WM: Right.

FH: Yes; so I wanted to kind of have a little snicker about this, you see, right at the end, and you deducted that sheer action treatment there. And you see how that this does what I'm describing…

WM: Yes. And that is a limited point of view, actually; the sheer action treatment…

FH: Yes. That's right. And also by making it a man to man battle at that point between Paul, who is an extremely complex character, and this almost stick figure, black, you see…

WM: Who is sort of, in many ways, Paul's counterpart.

FH: Exactly.

WM: He's a foil, in the classic sense of the word.

FH: A foil in the classic sense, in other places.

WM: Yes. Right.

FH: But at this point he becomes that…that impossible thing, that non-existent thing, the absolute evil.

WM: Yes.

FH: You see, and so we turn the whole thing whirling backward through the story. There was another thing there, in the pacing of the story, very slow at the beginning. It's a coital rhythm all the way through the story.

WM: It's a what?

FH: Coital rhythm.

WM: OK.

FH: Very slow pace, increasing all the way through, and when you get to the ending of it, I chopped it at a non breaking point, so that the person reading the story skids out of the story, trailing bits of it with him. On this I know I was successful, because people come to me and say they want more and…

WM: I have said this to my classes that, in many ways as satisfying as *Dune* is, I find it unsatisfying because there are so many unanswered questions; you don't tie up the loose ends of, say, Paul's sister, unless you read… what is it?.. a "Huntress of a Thousand Worlds" (Laughter)… that marvelous little… little footnote of Princess Alia. But… or several other things. The whole question of the Spacing Guild itself and how it got to be the way it was is handled very… you know…

FH: Well, let's… let's examine something, as far as fiction in general is concerned…

WM: All right.

FH: Now there are other reasons why stories are remembered, and I'm talking about story in the classic sense of the knights who goes from castle to castle to earn his meal.

WM: All right.

FH: Entertainment…

WM: Sure.

FH: The stories that are remembered are the ones that strike sparks from your mind, one way or another. It's like a grinding wheel. They touch you and sparks fly.

WM: Would this be something like the Miller's tale of Chaucer or Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, if you please?

FH: Yes, indeed.

WM: Or, well, we could adduce thousands of other examples up to, say, Treasure Island or what you will. There's sparks there.

FH: OK.

WM: I understand your term.

FH: Now we all have stories that we go on with after we finish reading them. As children, we can remember playing Treasure Island…

WM: Or playing Tom Sawyer…

FH: Or Tom Sawyer… any of these. We remember playing these. The story stayed with us… the characters and their conflicts, their joys, their play all stayed with us.

WM: And it enkindled sparks in our own imagination, so that we were then active in creative play.

FH: That's exactly right! We went on and told the story ourself…

WM: Yes.

FH: Now, I deliberately did this in *Dune* for that purpose. I want the person to go on and construct for himself all of these marvelous flights of fantasy and imagination. I want him to… you see, you haven't had the Spacing Guild explained completely… just enough so that you know its existence. Now with lots of people, they've got to complete this.

WM: Yes.

FH: So they build it up in their own minds. Now this is right out of the story, though, you see…

WM: Yes. Or the whole…

FH: The sparks have flown.

WM: Bene (Bené) Gesserit, you pronounce it?

FH: Bene (Benny) Gesserit, yes.

WM: Bene Gesserit. The… their whole mystique and so on is relatively unexplained. Why do they want the Kwisatz Haderach in the first place? You see, is relatively, at the time…

FH: The name of the game is power.

WM: Yes, and they want power. That… that explains it to a certain extent but…

FH: They want power in a specific way. You know, I've always been amazed by the statement or by the label of psychological warfare. There can be no such thing as psychological warfare… If you develop a psychological weapon sufficiently that it is destructive to any potential enemy, it will destroy you with the enemy… it's a two-edged sword without a handle, and if you grab it hard enough to wield it, you're going to…

WM: It's self destructive.

FH: Yes.

WM: So we could have a variation of the Lord Acton notion: power corrupts both the user and the receiver of the power, both absolutely…

FH: Right. Acton saw it.

WM: How interesting. I hadn't thought of the… who power corrupts…

FH: Now the Bene Gesserit see this. You see how they keep themselves in the background.

WM: Yes, that's true.

FH: They want a user of power they can control.

WM: I see… with safety to them.

FH: That's right. It's a safety device, you see, and I say this in several ways, not in this way, not in this blatant, you know, way, but implying it with all of its permutations, because there's much more to this. We could go on for several hours discussing this aspect of it.

WM: Yes. The whole attitude of Reverend Mother Gaius Mohiam, for example… Helen Gaius Mohiam… yes, I see how we could… various aspects of it… well, I – I'd like to… I'd like to examine this a little bit further in some of the religious constructs.

FH: Before we got into that…

WM: OK.

FH: Let me tell you something. I was up at Sonoma State last month, talked to a class up there, and the question that seemed to attract the most attention from the class… somebody asked back there, what's all this nonsense about controlling people with voice?

WM: (Laughter)

FH: There seemed to be a lot of agreement with this point of view, that it's impossible to do this. And so I said, we do it all the time.

WM: Of course we do!

FH: And it's amazing to me that anybody could even begin to question this as a fact of our existence. And they couldn't see it, so I said, well, I'll give you an example. I'm going to describe a man to you. You know this man. And I'm going to give you a task of controlling him by voice after I've described him and after you recognise him. I said, this is a man who was in World War I as sergeant, came home from World War I to his small town in the mid-west, married his childhood sweetheart and went into his father's business, raised two children, who he didn't understand… and they don't understand him… He joined the VFW and the legion, went on every picnic, every convention, lived by the double standard (he thought). Now on the phone, strictly by voice, I want you to make him mad.

ALL: (Laughter)

WM: Oink! Oink! Oink!

FH: Any one of a hundred thousand variations.

WM: Yes, certainly, certainly.

FH: Simplest thing in the world. Now what we're saying here is that…see, I-I've drawn a gross caricature.

WM: Of course!

FH: But, we're saying that if you know the individual well enough, if you know the subtitles of his strengths and weaknesses, that merely by the way you cast your voice, by the words you select…

WM: By the intonations…

FH: Whatever…

WM: Whatever.

FH: Yes, right. You can control him. Now if you can do it in a gross way, obviously with refinement you can do it in much more subtle fashion, and it's done all the time in politics.

WM: And this is one of the techniques, incidentally, that science

fiction, I think, does. It takes a possibility or something that does actually exist today and extrapolates from that, perhaps refines it, makes it more specific.

FH: The science of control by voice.

WM: Yes. Exactly.

BH: Isn't there a word in semantics where these messages that we get across… what was?…

FH: Metamessage.

BH: Metamessage.

WM: Metamessage.

FH: It's a well recognised thing in semantics and you see it… Hayakawa uses the example: you're talking, you've met somebody for the fist time, maybe at a business meeting in a convention, and you get acquainted and you're speaking. You exchange views and at the end of it you say, "We must get together for lunch sometime."

Now, under one example of this, the fellow will call you the next week or you'll call him and you will get together for lunch, and hen knows he's supposed to call you and make this luncheon date. Under the other example of this same phrase, he knows that this luncheon date. Under the other example of this same phrase, he know that this is "Goodbye, I don't care to talk to you any more." But it's the same phrase.

BH: And they're both polite.

FH: They're both polite.

WM: Oh, yes.

FH: And this is the metamessage.

WM: Yes…the hidden message underneath the message, and so on…

FH: Yes.

WM: Yes, I can understand that. Well, I had no trouble

understanding the question of the voice, as I read the novel, because, among the other things which the novel gave to me, was the whole question of communication and how we communicate on multiple levels, whether it be Paul communicating by shedding a tear… that's an act of communication on a very profound level… to the Fremen, whether communication of the voice or communication by sword or communication by a dozen different ways that we all do constantly as we're doing in this room right now. See, you're communicating by the… in one sense by the way you're both watching me as I speak and watching Frank and watching the recorder and watching what you are doing with your hands. There are all sorts of communications, just as I'm communicating and you are in a dozen hundreds of hidden different ways. I had no problem with that in the novel and I thought that it was rather well done. Let me go off on another parenthesis here. Did you ever read the novel *Nostromo* by Conrad?

FH: No.

WM: I was reminded very much as I read *Dune* for the first time of the reaction that I had when I first read *Nostromo*. I think that *Nostromo* is one of… if probably Conrad's greatest novel… it's certainly his most artistic achievement as well as his most profound… and I found myself thinking about *Nostromo* as I read *Dune*.

FH: Now I'm going to have to read it. (Laughter)

WM: Well, I mean that's very high praise, because *Nostromo* is ultimately the creation of an entire universe. It is the country of Casteguana in Central America. There is one thing in Central… in this country of Casteguana that influences everybody, and it is the presence of a gigantic silver mine. And the silver corrupts everybody in the country in one way or another. It corrupts the British people who are running the silver mine; it corrupts the incorruptible *Nostromo*, our man, who is the soft of a folk hero of the thing; it corrupts everybody; it totally controls the country; and in watching how these people interrelate to the problem of the silver mine and the parallels there, you see, between *Dune* and *Nostromo*, to me, as I read it as a Professor of English, were very strong. This is one of the things I object to in among my own compatriots… that they are unable to see that something like *Nostromo* is in a very real sense a type of science fiction. We have created a mythical country, based upon reality, where the people react in certain ways to things which we would react to in other ways. But it's said over here, just as the Fremen react to…

FH: Oh, yes, it's my contention that especially in *Dune*… and *Dune* is an exposition of this point that man himself is going to change. We have changed, but our changes… the actual basic change is a gradual climb. Now I don't see this as progress, I see it as a sort of entropy and as a growth of complexity. But that this is such slow process… that in thousands upon thousands upon thousands of years we would still recognise the emotions, the reactions, all of these things and given any set of forces which you can delineate: the silver mine, the geriatric spice, the existence of certain hard lines of power control and communication…

WM: As perhaps oversimplified by, say, the Harkonnens versus the Atreides.

FH: Yes.

WM: Families…

FH: Yes. You have a classical feudal system here.

WM: Yes; sure.

FH: It's my contention that feudalism is a natural condition of human beings…not that it is the only condition or not that it is the right condition…that it is just a way we have of falling into organisations. I like to use the example of the Berlin Museum Beavers. You ever come across this?

WM: No.

FH: Well my… the numbers are going to be wrong but it's on this order… Before World War II there were a number of families of beaver in the Berlin Museum. They were European beaver. They

had been there, raised in captivity for something on the order of seventy beaver generations, in cages. World War II came along and a bomb freed some of them into the countryside. What did they do? They went out and they started building dams.

ALL: (Laughter)

WM: Wow! Wow!

FH: Now tribal organisation… feudalism is tribal organisation…

WM: Oh, yes.

FH: And that's what I'm talking about. So, tribal organisation is a natural organisation of humankind. We tend to fall into it, given any chance at all, given the proper stresses, or given the proper lack of stresses.

WM: And I think we could extrapolate from that notion and say we have many more feudal or tribal aspects in our society than we might have otherwise thought about. I think that the existence of the Roman Catholic in its feudal state as long as it has existed is sort of proof of what you're saying.

FH: The hippies are a proof of it.

WM: Yes.

FH: Look at the organisation they set up. It's a tribal organisation.

BH: A business office is feudal.

FH: Yes. A company is feudal.

BH: A university, perhaps?

WM: Oh, yes, indeed; an English department, very true!

ALL: (Laughter)

FH: Well, of course what we're doing here is oversimplifying.

WM: Yes.

FH: The complexities of it and the variations on the theme are multitude but the framework is there, the skeleton is there, and you can recognise that skeleton. So I set up the situation in *Dune* where the natural evolvement was a classic feudalism, and for a very specific purpose. I wanted the lines of power to be clear.

WM: Yes. At the same time, feudal lines of power were extremely complicated. I don't want to contradict you but it…

FH: No, I understand what you're saying. That's why I said…

WM: But, while they were simple, they were nonetheless multi-level, as you indicate with the Baron Harkonnen and the Na-Baron, and so on. All of these things of the relationship to the Imperium… this… you want to go back to the 14th… 13th… 14th century in England, of the war of the roses.

FH: No. By clear this, I meant in this sense recognisable by anybody who knows the first damn thing about history.

WM: Precisely. The fief has a set of obligations from top to bottom,

bottom to top, mutual back and forth, ultimately.

FH: Yes. It's a feedback situation.

WM: Exactly. And this kind of thing, the kind of loyalty that, say, Gurney Halleck gave Paul, or gave Paul's father, this is the kind of thing you mean.

FH: The loyalty to the family.

WM: Yes, certainly, and "I am the rightful Duke of Atreides."

FH: Yes.

WM: At the very end of the thing, as he is speaking to Sardaukar… you pronounce it…

FH: The Sardaukar.

WM: Yes, very interesting.. I know my students had had a lot of fun

tracing down the background (Laughter) of the Fremen as far back as they can from the hints you drop in the novel, and coming to their surprise, delighted surprise, that they were once probably on Salusa Secundus, and this accounts for part of the way they are, in the hardening there, and, further, the tracing of the life cycle of Shai-Hulud is really an interesting thing for them because you don't quite complete whole thing in your appendices.

FH: Of course, what have I set up there? We know our information about the cyclic nature… the interdependence in our own environment is quite sketchy in many areas, but we do know this… we know that you need… to create large bodies of sand, dust, whatnot, you need water action… some, anyway… so I've set up multitudes of creatures who substitute for this… quite logical… they do this. And I postulated that in one vector of their life circle, water is poison to them. We see this sort of thing on planet Earth right now where a creature can live in one environment, in one vector, but that environment will kill it in another vector. The anopheles mosquito is a good example. And it doesn't take much of a stretch of the imagination to carry this further in that classic science fiction way, saying that, given other circumstances on another planet, a creature could develop something that we could see was analogous to this and… but would do these other things… now, there's another element of Shai-Hulud too. Shai-Hulud serves a specific function among other things in the history, but a specific feral function. It's the unthinking beast. It's the black beast. It's the personification of the bull in the arena… not the way the bull in the arena… not the way the bull in the arena actually is, but the personification…

WM: The mystique of the black…

FH: The mystique of it… and it's… there it is.

WM: I never took… the black beast has connotations that I never gave it. Maybe it's my taking it wrong from your terminology. It's the mythical beast. It's the archetypal beast… is that what you're talking about? Is that what you mean by black beast?

FH: The archetypal beast… that's right. Now I bring this up because of something you're mentioning earlier, tracing the archetypal background.

WM: Yes.

FH: And I made it, classically, the archetypal black beast, the one who lives underground in the cavern, with the gold.

WM: I see. OK., right. Well, this is the dragon of Beowulf, who lives in the cave.

FH: Yes.

WM: Guarding the gold.

FH: With the golden dagger.

WM: Right; precisely. Incidentally, L. Frank Baum used this is one of his Oz books… used the dragon guard hoarding the gold, guarding gold, believe it or not.

FH: Well, this… that is why I put this in there. It's a familiar…

WM: And gold, of course, becomes the geriatric spice.

FH: That's right.

WM: In other sense.

FH: Yes.

WM: Which I once figured out… one of my students figured out that

the geriatric spice itself is probably the defecated matter of Shai-Hulud…

ALL: (Laughter)

WM: …in one of its vectors, or it might have been… no, not… not the defecated matter at all, so…no, no, it was the eggs, perhaps, and that's why they're guarded, among other things.

BH: The valley of bat-guano.

WM: Yes; oh, true. They have lots of… you know, kids have lots of fun with this.

FH: Of course. The… yes, and… and I did that deliberately. The… the value of a good story in the entertainment sense is how much of this it tips off… how much it starts rolling.

WM: Sure.

FH: So that you start creating your own story, the one that's in all of us, you see.

WM: And in that sense there is no right answer to the final… let's say, the complete life cycle of Shai-Hulud.

FH: Yes. Do you want me to pin it down for you? I can. I mean, I had it in mind…

WM: You had it in mind?

FH: Yes, but…

WM: I had it worked our, too. Let's… let's compare notes.

FH: Well, I'd be interested, before I saw anything… I… to hear what you have to say.

WM: I got to get my book. I'm going to turn this off for a minute… (tape pause)…

WM: well, we're back again. We're talking about the archetypal

patterns in *Dune* for a minute… off on this tangent now…

FH: Well, we got on to the sequel for a while.

WM: Yes.

FH: And there's a point here that I think should be made. Campbell turned down the sequel. Now his argument was that I had created an anti-hero in Paul in the sequel, and he has built his magazine… I'm… I'm oversimplifying… grossly oversimplifying.

WM: Sure.

FH: But this is the essence of it really and truthfully accurate…

WM: Yes.

FH: That he had built his magazine on the hero. Now it's my contention that the difference between a hero and an anti-hero is where you stop the story, and if you're true to life, if you're true to life, giving these ingredients, then the story goes on, because human beings go on. Now, you can confine your story to one

individual, and therefore as far as he's concerned the story begins with birth and ends with death. But if you're dealing with larger movements…

WM: The parameters are much broader.

FH: That's right… as they are in this book.

WM: Yes.

FH: Then there is no real ending. It's just the place where you stop the story. And one of the reasons, by the way, why in the book *Dune* I stop it the way I do, deliberately building up a carrying momentum, as though you were going down a slide and then just chopping it…

WM: To a moment of triumph and than that's it…

FH: And then you skid out of the story with all of this clinging to you.

WM: Yes. I can see that. Yes. But as I understand the Jungian archetypal patterns, you know, the Lord Raglan steps of the hero… why, *Dune* takes up about the first fifteen of them, more or less, and

if… I know nothing about the sequel other than the few words you've told me, but I would be willing to predict that it you follow the pattern, the archetypal hero pattern, he goes through many of the things that Lord Raglan sets out in the notion of the hero and the quest hero. Ultimately, some… Paul has to die. It's just a question of how and under what circumstances, and probably as a result of some of these tensions which have been previously operating.

FH: Yes, several of them, and one of them, of course, is the tension of prognostication.

WM: Yes.

FH: Prediction.

WM: This is foreshadowed in here.

FH: Yes.

WM: He never sees his own death moment, but he's always concerned about it.

FH: Yes. We bring this… yes, that's right… we bring this to a head, this idea that I'm expounding: that… you know… when you talk to any of the average individual and he says, "Oh, if I could only know everything that's going to happen tomorrow, wouldn't that be wonderful?"

WM: Oh, sure.

FH: What he is talking about if the fifth race at Hialeah.

WM: Yes, or will that girl say yes or no? (Laughter)

FH: That's right. That's what he's talking about, and he doesn't really want to know everything that's going to happen tomorrow because this is precisely what I do to Paul. We carry this to its logical outcome and reach a point in the sequel where he is physically blinded… is without sight… I think this is what set Campbell off, the fact…

WM: Oh, here comes an anti-hero and that's… that's… yes.

FH: Yes. But he…here is Paul. He's physically blinded and yet he

knows everything… everything…that's going to happen. He's lived this one before. Think of how boring that is but think of how mysterious and terrifying…

WM: That it would be to everybody else. Yes, sure.

FH: A guy… it would be as though I without sight, you see; I had nothing but a couple of sockets here, and [Beverly] comes in and picks up a cigarette out of a package…I lean over and light it for her.

WM: And say it's a Pall Mall.

FH: Yes, and say "Oh, you're back to Pall Mall's."

WM: Yes.

FH: Paul does such things as grabbing a microphone out of a trooper's hand and relaying orders immediately after the accident in which his eyes are lost… and greeting people in the hallway as he passes them. The… of course it builds up this terrifying god head among the people around him, but it also foreshadows their turning against him, because if a person really does this sort of thing to you, you're going to get away from him one way or another.

WM: They crucify him.

FH: Yes.

WM: In many ways they would. I-I can see this and this would lead us to all sorts of possible symbolic interpretations of knowledge, and so going back to the Oedipal notion.

FH: Now… yes… It is my contention, of course…

WM: And I've always wondered about the Oedipal aspects of the novel.

FH: Oh, they're there.

WM: But let's not go into that right now. (Laughter.)

FH: They're there and deliberately.

WM: Yes.

FH: The… no… it's my contention… I think I'm probably right on this… that the thing that got to Campbell was not that I had an anti-hero in this sense, but that I had destroyed one of his gods.

WM: Oh.

FH: See… because the prediction and ESP.

WM: Oh, of course! With Campbell that's… you know… obviously!

FH: Yes.

WM: Yes.

FH: You see, if you know the magazine and his editorials.

WM: Yes, sure. I've been reading it since 1940.

FH: All right. The you know that he is completely devoted to this idea, and I'm not… I'm not arguing against him, but I'm merely saying that this is his point of view, and this pokes a great deal of fun at… not so much fun as it pokes a big hole in the whole theory that…

WM: That's… yes.

FH: That it would be great to know everything that's going to happen tomorrow.

WM: And so he rejected it, huh?

FH: Yes. So he rejected it.

WM: Isn't that interesting?

FH: But Galaxy snapped it right up and paid Campbell's rates.

WM: Huh! Well, well, well, well. Looking for another Nebula for that

one? (Laughter)

FH: I don't know. I didn't even look for a Nebula for the fist one…I didn't write it with that in mind.

WM: U-huh.

FH: My chief concern is to tell a good story. It really is.

WM: Virginia Heinlein says that every time that Bob wanders away she says, "Cut to the chase."

ALL: (Laughter)

FH: Yes. I heard him say that. (Cough) That's the classic Hollywood approach.

WM: Yes. Oh, could we go back a little bit and… tell us more about the novel as it developed in your mind.

FH: Well, you were going to do something.

WM: Oh, I was going to trace Shai-Hulud for you. Well, I can't quite do it completely without referring to the text, and I'm afraid that most of it is given in the text, but, I think that um.. the question of the sand trout and the…

FH: That's right.

WM: …is one of the vectors from the sandtrout to the dry leathery to the sandtrout – no – dry leathery thing – sandtrout – to Little Maker to a…

FH: To the big – to the worm – to the big one.

WM: To the… yes… well – but it – it goes through – does little maker just go directly into tho worm, or isn't there another…

FH: No, that's it, it goes directly into the worm.

WM: Goes directly into the worm.

FH: It's a matter of growth process.

WM: All right. To the – to Shai'hulud itself, and then Shai'hulud spice, I think, becomes the eggs.

FH: Well, the spice, as I conceived it.

WM: Spermatic material…

FH: The spice as I conceived it was necessary for the development from, let's say, the pupil stage.

WM: Yes.

FH: For him to go beyond the pupil stage, they had to have to be in the presence of the spice. That's the way I conceived it.

WM: I see.

FH: That's why it's so…

WM: I think the spice itself is almost as being spermatic material.

FH: That's right. That's exactly right.

MH: And then there's spice growing into the… – well, ultimately the little maker.

FH: U-huh.

WM: As I saw it.

BH: Is that something like royal honey, royal nectar.

FH: No, the way I saw it is slightly different but… the spice in the presence of a… of a dead…worm.

WM: Oh yes. Killed by the water of life. Then this becomes… and

you're off in the spice below.

FH: That's right. This becomes the… the seed of the new life cycle.

WM: Ok. Yes. It's almost orgasmic in that sense.

FH: That's right. Yes.

WM: Probably deliberately so.

FH: Yes. I built these things in there deliberately, all the way through it.

WM: Yes. How interesting. Well, if we can go back then and talk about… a little bit more about the formation of the novel from say 1953 in the germinal ideas and your file folders and so on… we were up to about there a little while… while ago.

FH: Well I'm not too clear…

WM: On dates…

FH: Dates. They… they don't concern me.

WM: No.

FH: I – I'm more involved with the actual piece of paper in front of me.

WM: All right. How long… how long a writing process did this take then from the time this began 'til the… say… the time you…

FH: You mean, the actual physical writing process?

WM: U-huh.

FH: About two years.

WM: About two years, and you wrote it when you were in Mexico?

FH: No.

WM: Oh.

FH: I wrote it here.

WM: Wrote it here.

FH: U-huh. But I had the idea with me in Mexico… was adding to it, you see. We're talking about two different things here, the accumulation of data…

WM: Data and the physical writing process.

FH: And the physical sitting down in front of the paper and actually putting the story down. It's almost as though you're filling a container.

WM: I see. That has been pretty well built up at that time…

FH: Yes.

WM: It's interesting… Harry Harrison describes the writing process with him rather well in a tape I made with him a few months ago. He is absolutely uninterruptible from, say, 12:30 in the afternoon 'til 5:00 at night, because the ideas as they form in his mind sort of becomes extensions of his (Cough) excuse me, fingers in his typewriter and that they are up here and that …that any interruption, whether it be a telephone ringing or his wife knocking at the door or anything at all is liable to shatter that idea as it transforms itself into paper.

FH: This is a very evanescent thing and I have to fight this, but Bev is very nice to me about this. She keeps the…

BH: A writer's children are always… they learn to tiptoe, and "Is daddy writing?" In fact, you don't have to say be quiet. You say your father is writing and… silence.

WM: What is your writing schedule?

FH: Well, it varies… depends on what I'm doing… writing for the magazine… but as a general rule it goes like this: I'll get home somewhere around five o'clock when Bev is here, when she's not

working as she has been the last couple of weeks. She'll have dinner ready at that time or very close to that time. I'll then take an hour's nap and then work sometimes until one o'clock in the morning. Then I hit the sack and get up and sometimes if a story is strong in mode I get up in the morning and write… get up at five o'clock in the morning or so and write for an hour or two sometimes before going down to San Fransisco.

WM: Yes.

FH: And this is the thing I want to get out of because I can write eight hours a day in two bursts and I don't see any reason why I shouldn't be doing what I want… writing what I want to write during those times. I don't envision supporting myself entirely by science fiction writing in the sense of writing only science fiction, because I have other axes to grind, too.

WM: Yes.

FH: I'm going to do a nonfiction book on air pollution, for example. I'm really hipped on this ecology thing… the consequence of some of the things that we're doing to our planet. And I don't mean in the lock-it-up-and-throw-it-away sense of the classic conservationalist… in other words, turn it all into wilderness. I don't mean that, but there are ways of living with our planet and not against it and this is the attitude that we have to develop, and it is an attitude…

WM: Thank you, Mr. Kynes. (Laughter) Pardot Kynes.

FH: But it is an attitude.

WM: Sure.

FH: It… it's something that has to be ingrained into us as children.

WM: As my wife is fond of telling my children, a fountain pen is not a screw driver.

FH: Very good. (Laughter)

WM: And each has its own purpose for whatever it may be and… and if you misuse that thing it will turn around and bite you. You'll ruin a screw driver or ruin a fountain pen in trying to make it work like a screw driver, and we're rapidly ruining our air, our water, our planet, if you will.

FH: I found that… you were talking about the economics of writing

and selling… *Dune* has made… made us at this point about $ 15,000 since the first sale.

WM: This includes the sale of… what was it… something like eight chapters to Campbell?

FH: That's right.

WM: By the way, I did not read it in analog. I read it first in book form. How much of it did appear in…

FH: Almost all of it.

WM: Almost all of it.

FH: U-huh. In fact, in one sense, a little more, because there were capsule recapitulations, the synopses at the beginning.

WM: Oh, yes. Did you write those?

FH: Yes, I did. The… the way it comes in… I've found… and this is broad for a novel… it makes somewhere between five and seven thousand dollars on the… in the first twelve months of sale, and this depends on how far you sell it, how many times you sell it. Then I found that with my own work it'll go on earning for a long time. We received several hundred dollars out of "Dragon In The Sea" that… last year.

WM: Is that right?

FH: Yes. The old dragon.

WM: Yes. It's still one of my favourites. Still one of my favourites.

FH: Well, it's still selling. Selling beautifully in Japan.

WM: I understand that you speak Japanese?

FH: No.

WM: No? Where did I hear that?

FH: No, I – I don't speak Japanese. I can read a bit of ideogram.

WM: Ah so.

FH: Ah so. (Laughter) But I was raised with Japanese Americans in the Pacific Northwest in an area where there were a great many of them, let's put it that way.

WM: Yes.

FH: A place called Fife between Seattle and Tacoma and…

WM: That's up near glorious Tumwater. (Laughter)

FH: Yes, it's north of Tumwater. (Laughter) Ah, an Oly fan… if I'd known, I would have brought in a mess of beer. By the way, we have another wine in there. Would you like…?

WM: No, I'm going to stick to coffee for a while, thanks. I'll be up all night reading, but then, what difference does it make.

FH: Well, anyway, I was raised with them, and eat in Japanese and I know a few phrases.

WM: Yes. I learned quite a… (tape paused) …

WM: … well, you were speaking of your writing plans for the future. You say the sequel to *Dune* will be out this fall sometime?

FH: Or earlier.

WM: Or earlier.

FH: Possibly in October, possibly earlier. There's some question of I requested that it be moved up a bit and I'm not sure that everyone's in agreement and maybe that's best… I mean I'm not…

WM: Yes.

FH: I just thought it would be a better idea for several reasons to

publish it earlier. One of the reasons is that I have built a *Dune Tarot* into the sequel.

WM: Do that one again?

FH: You know what the Tarot deck is?

WM: Oh, of course, yes.

FH: Ok.

WM: Oh, I've missed that.

FH: I built a *Dune Tarot* into it and it's hot right now.

WM: Yes.

FH: And I was just thinking economically they ought to capitalize on it.

WM: Oh, sure, why not. A *Dune Tarot*. Well. See, I teach Yeats and Eliot and so on…

FH: Of course, yes.

WM: In fact, I – I own my own private deck.

FH: Yes. WE have one. It's my contention that if you immerse a society in a great deal of what we call fortune telling, you know, that you cloud the whole process… you see what happened in classic times in Greek myth… historic times, when the oracle was… had terrifying accuracy.

WM: The Oedipus cycle for example.

FH: There weren't a lot of oracles around. You went to Delphi.

WM: Delphi, right.

FH: Or to the local madman.

WM: Yes. Look at the birds and cast a few auguries here and there.

FH: Yes. Who might have… might kill a chicken and look at the entrails.

WM: Or note which way the blood spurts.

FH: That's right. Any one of these methods, which I call ignition principles as far as prediction is concerned. You see, I contend that there is such a thing… that you can do it, whether you do it by a subliminal thing… petit perception, or whether it is a…

WM: You use the petit perception in that scene in the conservatory, incidentally. I thought it was rather well done. With… Countess… Fenring?

FH: That's right.

WM: Leaving that thing for Lady Jessica to pick up, end parenthesis.

FH: Yes, that's right. That's… well, whether our predictive faculties are prophecy… and we've had our prophets… it's a product of an accumulation of… in a sense of a computer is accumulating data.

WM: Yes.

FH: Or something mystical in a sense that it is unexplained thus far… unexplained… I'm looking at it through Western eyes now as you'll undoubtedly see… that… that it is a mechanical scientific principle and if you get enough data to bear on it, you'll understand it. Now this doesn't necessarily follow, of course, that we can understand everything in the universe. Ask me about… what is the basic about what I think is the basic fallacy in science.

WM: All right. What is the basic fallacy in science, tell us, pray tell! (Laughter)

FH: You want a prognostication. Ok. You know, I think… I think it's the idea that we can invent… that of course, science fiction is based on this… the idea that… that we can invent anything we imagine, and having invented it, we must use it…

WM: And then live by the consequences of it.

FH: Exactly. Yes. Now, this is the Western… see, this is the Western fallacy.

WM: And this is one of the great things about the east… that it does not…

FH: Yes, of course we frown on it because the achieve their ignition by… by methods that we can see are hogwash.

WM: Right. And… or we misinterpret their methods, for example… if we were to consider, say, the tantric yoga, all we would think of is that they're achieving nirvana by means of sex, and it's much more than that.

FH: Yes.

WM: Or, as… as one specific example, we… we take only one aspect of it, and make sort of an end out of it…

FH: Or, hell, then you go back to the… the slitting the neck of the chicken and watching which direction the blood spurts.

WM: Yes.

FH: You see, you see… what I'm saying about ignition.

WM: U-huh.

FH: This ignites the… you see, you have to have confidence that you can do it… you have to believe you can do it, and believing you can do it, the process is ignited by any one of a million methods. We've experimented with many… the direction the birds fly or any of this, you see.

WM: Well, I had a student a few years ago who… whose wife was so accurate with the Tarot deck that…that she stopped using it completely.

FH: I must tell you something.

WM: She frightened herself.

FH: I terrified a gal one time in a weird… I was about seventeen. We

were sitting in her aunt's house and her aunt and an uncle were out of sight, but within hearing distance, down in some (…) in their library. It was nearby and we were sitting across the… from each other on hassocks, the mouth of the fireplace, a big stone fireplace, between us, down to embers. We'd been out on a date, and I brought her home. We didn't have anything going… we… she was just a gal I knew. I happened to have had a crush on her younger sister, and she knew it, and… ah, unrequited love at seventeen is hideous thing.

ALL: (Laughter)

WM: Oh, yes!

FH: Anyway, that was a… it was great upsurge of Rhine consciousness at the time.

WM: Yes.

FH: Predicting the cards… of course, our interpretation of predicting the cards, was, you know… we had only one kind of cards, that was a deck of cards.

WM: Sure.

FH: So she broke out a brand new deck of cards and shuffled them. We'd been talking about it on the way home and… quite shadowy in the room… there was the firelight and Pat was sitting across the fireplace and the light from where…. her aunt and uncle were playing cribbage in the back in there, both of them deaf, by the way… you hear this (Falsetto) Fifteen two and two is four (Laughter). Counting…

WM: (Falsetto) A pair of sex.

FH: Yes, that's right. So there was a light from back in there and so she could see the cards, and she said, see if you can predict the cards. And she had been shuffling them, so she picked up the first card, and I closed my eyes, and I saw that card. And so I told her… that was it. She put it down. That was the card. I swear to you, Will, I went through that entire deck, predicting every card that she was going to see, and there wasn't a failure at all. I told her every card. I did it the same every time. Now, whether I saw a reflection in her eyes… in other words, we'll go back to petit perception.

WM: Yes.

FH: Or whether this was some actual keyed-in transmission. We were simpatico or something…

WM: Tuned in on her wavelength.

FH: Empathy or what is rampid to this atmosphere… I don't know what it was, but I predicted what the cards were, and I said "My goodness," I said, "This is fascinating! Let's do it again. Show them to me again." So she shuffled the deck again, and cut them a few times, and we started going through them again. And we got down to, oh, five or six cards in the deck, and suddenly she threw the whole deck down on the hearth of the fireplace and said, "This scares me! I don't want to do this any more!"

WM: Hmmmmm. Have you ever had that kind of success…

FH: Never. Never again. But it was a… the odds against being able to do this by anything but some unrecognized…

WM: Force.

FH: Contact or force…I'm not ruling out the fact that I may have seen… she wasn't wearing glasses, but the light may have been such that, without even recognizing it, I saw them or reflection of them in her eyes, or something of that nature. This is possible.

WM: There are more things ‘twixt heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of…

FH: Oh. Oh, Will! (Laughter)

WM: Why are you laughing? You expect things like that from an English teacher don’t you? (Laughter)

BH: Not frequently… (tape paused)…

WM: I’d like to ask you a couple of more questions (Cough). I wanted to talk about some of the religious constructs behind the novel. It’s obvious that some of the Arabian mystique is there, and I think that any perceptive reader can pick this up, but part of the question relates to the identity of Paul as an avatar, as a new messiah.

FH: That’s right.

WM: Or as a new prophet or what you will. Would you care to talk about that a little?

FH: Well, one of the threads in the story is to trace a possible way a messiah is created in our society, and I hope I was successful in making it believable. Here we have the entire process, or at least the large and some of the subtle elements of the construction of this, both from the individual standpoint, and from the way society demands this of you. It's the references in there, you know, that the man must recognize the myth he is living in, because the creation of an avatar is a myth making process. We've done it in our… in recent times. Look at what's happening to John F. Kennedy.

WM: Oh, sure.

FH: Who was a very earthy, real, and not totally holy man… so here we have a likable person, now, you see…

WM: Yes.

FH: But real in the flesh and blood sense who by the process of emulation becomes something larger than life, far larger than life, and I've just explored all of as many permutations as I could recognize in the process.

WM: Oh, I – I caught overtones of Lawrence of Arabia in the thing,

for example.

FH: He could very well become an avatar for the… for the Arabs.

WM: Right.

FH: If Lawrence of Arabia had died at the crucial moment of the British…

WM: Say, when Allenby walked into Jerusalem.

FH: Yes. If he had died… if, for example, he had gone up and killed the people who were destroying his breed, walked into that conference and said, Gentlemen, I have here under my jillaba a surprise, Bang! Bang! Bang! and he had been killed…

WM: He'd have been deified.

FH: He would have been deified. And it would have been the most terrifying thing the British had ever encountered, because the Arabs would have swept that entire peninsula with that sort of force, because one of the things we've done in our society is exploited this

power… Western man has exploited this avatar power.

WM: Well, if I could ask then one more question along this same line, you mentioned a little bit earlier that you studied comparative religion at one time.

FH: That's right.

WM: A student of it… was it from your experiencing reading comparative religions that brought you to this particular notion of an avatar?

FH: That was part of it. Of course, it was ignited by the idea of… by the ideas I encountered in reading about desert societies, and I think that the idea of the way Western society has exploited this force. We have, you know…

WM: Oh, yes.

FH: We've used it as… quite consciously we've sent out our missionaries to do our dirty work for us… then come along behind them with the certain belief that we're right in anything we do, because God has told us so… God in the person of the avatar.

WM: Well, one last personal question, then, if… one last personal question, then, if you don't mind. Do you profess any specific religion yourself? You mentioned vendetta earlier or other backgrounds. I'm a little curious… if it's not at all pertinent, why say so.

FH: Oh, I don't mind saying so. I mean it… I don't really profess a religion in the sense that we normally recognize religion I believe in more in self development in the Zen sense.

WM: Well, I caught those Zen elements from time to time, I thought, in… in *Dune*, and in fact, the whole Zensunni school line thought was an aspect of that…

FH: You know, don't you, that one element of the construction of this book… it's all the way through there… that I wrote certain parts of it in haiku and other poetical forms, and then expanded them to prose to create a pace.

WM: I hadn't picked those out specifically, but I sort of caught something of that, and that's ah…

FH: Some of my friend have come back to me with examples out of

it and said, was this a…

WM: Haiku.

FH: Was this a haiku?

WM: Or a tanka, or something…

FH: Yes, or a tanka, and yet they're in there…

WM: Very good. And thank you very much. We certainly appreciate this.

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Fusion Magazine, 1970

The Ecology of Survival, BY Ed Leimbacher, Fusion MAGAZINE #34, 1970

The two most influential fantasy writers are more than likely Robert Heinlein and Arthur C. Clarke. Just a notch below them in terms of recognition and acceptance among the current audience is Frank Herbert, who in Dune*, and* Dune Messiah*, has given us a book-world of scope and event. Both are episodic semi-Biblical narratives of exciting incident and intriguing possibility. Herbert's works, in and out of books, has much the same feel.*

"We haven't learned to live *with* our world yet – just on it. We tend to act before thinking out the whole chain of consequences. That's the real test of an ecologist – that he understands all the real consequences."

The speaker is Frank Herbert. Newspaper-man, photographer, family man, author of renowned under/above-ground classic *Dune* (plus 15-20 other fiction novels as well). Herbert knows whereof he speaks: among a whole host of subjects. *Dune* is most of all a book about ecology – about survival in an alien environment; about man remaking the whole surface of a planet; about deeper reverence for all the myriad forms of life. It just may be that *Dune* and planetary ecologist/sci-fi novelist Herbert can tell us something about our own beleaguered world of the Seventies.

America's trip may be conspicuous consumption and ridiculous waste, but on the planet Dune the people use and *re*-use everything

carefully and wisely as well. Michelangelo Antonioni may visit Death Valley and come away empty-handed, but Frank Herbert invents a world of Death Valleys – of awesome deserts, sand-churning monster worms, and harsh Fremen existing in their midst – and in so doing creates one of the most splendid imagined universes, and the best novels, science fiction or otherwise, of this century.

For *Dune*, coupled with its recently published continuation, *Dune Messiah*, is an extraordinary piece of work. Multi-layered, multi-faceted, the novel simultaneously combines fantastic adventure, complex characterization, dense literate style, metaphysic and psychic investigation, economic speculation, messianic psychology and of course ecological awareness and invention.

The novel's origins are deceptively simple. "The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service were running a test station among the dunes on the Oregon Coast," says Herbert. "This was back in the mid-Fifties. They were developing ways to control sand dunes, and the program was so successful that people from Israel, Algeria, Chile and other nations were there to see how they did it."

"I went there to do a magazine article about the program – in the course of the visit I got this flaming idea in my head: what would it be like on an entire planet like the most severe of our deserts? What would go into the eco-systems on a planet like that?"

That was the beginning. But, Herbert goes on, "Concurrently I'd been thinking about the origins of the messiah myths in our society and others. I saw that as a motif to run through this non-existent novel, because a good story is more about people that things. I just began doing what I always do for a story – collecting folders of information. It was probably six or seven years before I actually began putting words down on paper."

By 1963 when Herbert completed *Dune,* his novel had grown to

more than 500 pages. One publisher rejected it as too long, but John W. Campbell at *Fantasy* knew a major property when he saw it: his magazine ran *Dune* in two three-part segments in 1964. Chilton's hardcover edition appeared that winter, and the Ace paperback in 1965.

There has been no looking back since. Winning both the Hugo and Nebula awards for best science-fiction novel of the year, *Dune* gradually gained a word-of-mouth reputation among hip people as well. Now, says the author, there are way over 300,000 copies in print, and many campus-area bookstores can't keep the book in stock.

"I presupposed a dialectic or a growth pattern," says the author, "birth, death, regeneration – and I deliberately wanted that poignancy of looking back in good times, in *Dune Messiah*. You see, the whole *Dune* sequence is written in layers – it's plotted in depth as well as in a linear direction. The action, the lyric poetry, the metaphysical, psychological and ecological, they're all deliberately layered in."

"In many respects," he goes on, "it was a gamble on my part. I didn't know if that sort of layering would make it's point with the American reading public, because it's not seen much in science fiction. So I get a great deal of pleasure out of the fact that people are actually enjoying *Dune*. I'm happy to have done it. But it's like a pool shark who says: 'Six ball in the corner pocket.' To tell you the truth, I wasn't sure that the cue ball wouldn't go right in after it."

A long-time resident of the Bay Area, Frank Herbert now lives in Seattle, on the top floor of an old mansion – presently subdivided into several apartments – on Queen Ann Hill overlooking the ferryboats and the chilly waters of the Sound.

"I'm really a native of this area," he explains, "and I was missing it.

There are things you can do here with a small expenditure of time that take a great expenditure down south. Up here I can be in the wilderness in an hour. In terms of relative degradation of the environment. Seattle's getting there – but is it's as much better than San Francisco as San Francisco is than Los Angeles."

Seated in his living room, Herbert talks about his life and his won vision, looming beyond him are several ceiling-high bookcases, packed for the most part with non-fiction reading, including whole shelves devoted to desert ecology volumes with titles like *Arabia Felix*, *The Land of Gilead*, and *Black Land, Black Land*.

"I was born in Tacoma," he says, "and raised in and around Puget Sound. My father had several different businesses, but he lost a fortune in the Depression. In 1928, for example, in the the heyday of dance halls, he built a Spanish Castle down in the Highline." (Rock history footnote: during the Fifties and into the early Sixties, Spanish Castle – located about midway between Seattle and Tacoma on Highway 99 – was the biggest Rock'n'Roll emporium, a young black later known as Jimi Hendrix used to make it to the Spanish Castle on Saturday nights to watch such outasite Northwest groups as the *Wailers* and *Little Bill and the Blue Notes*. Remember "Spanish Castle Magic" on *Axis: Bold as Love?*)

"I went to the University of Washington", says Herbert. "I met my wife there at a writing class. But I dropped out of the U because they wouldn't let me do what I wanted, which was to cross department lines. To hell with requirements. I didn't want a degree – all I wanted was to pick and choose courses, like in a cafeteria line."

Like every other writer you've ever read about Herbert's done the fascinating ways of earning a living routine, his book jacket bio lists "lay analyst" and "oyster driver" among several others. But for more that 30 years most often he's been a newspaperman, nowadays for

love rather than money. Herbert works as Higher Education Editor for Seattle's Hearst newspaper, the *Post Intelligencer*.

"The successful writer mystique carries on over into the job. It gives me the leverage to say to the *P-I*, 'This is the kind of newspapering I want to do.' Newspaper works keeps you right on the edge of what's going on – it sensitizes you to current change. I do things as a newsman," Herbert adds, "that I know damn well I wouldn't be doing at my typewriter."

There's a short break for strong, dark tea served by Herbert's wife Bev. During the pause she also exhibits his major awards for *Dune*, the Hugos is a polished silver rocket, the Nebula, a crystal cube with a glittering, seemingly swirling galaxy floating within. Comments the author, "The Hugo is kind of a fan award, and it means more at the box office. But the Nebula represents a mail-poll of fellow craftsmen, the Science Fiction Writers of America."

At 49, Herbert looks considerably younger: short, stocky, barrel chested, with crewcut fair hair and a greying, reddish beard, his mustache juts pugnaciously and his blue eyes twinkle just enough to make you think of an old-fashioned fishing-boat skipper or a good-natured anarchist. He gestures a lot when he talks and that starts now, as Herbert warms to the tea and the subject:

"We science fictionists are pragmatic idealists," he says. "Our stories are usually anchored in something that's going on right now – given this: what-if… We create whole worlds that are sort of caricatures of the existing thing, and we use them to throw the present scene into bas belief."

Surely *Dune* fits into that category?

"I'm damn hipped on this environment thing," answers Herbert. "I don't think we should ignore the legislative approach, but I don't

really believe we can solve it legally. I'd feel better if something like the churches were involved instead of some government agency – I try to get to those soft spots and apply leverage. That's one reason I accepted this *P-I* job: it puts me in direct contact with university level people. If we're going to solve all these environment problems, it's going to take strong action from that segment of the populace. That's what I mean about applying leverage to the system."

Herbert doesn't really belong to any citizens' environmental groups, but he is one of about a thousand steam-engine car owners in the country. He explains, "There's no name to out organizations, no by-laws, no dues. Every member is a bishop and can swear in as many members as he likes. All you have to do is to raise your right hand and swear. 'Never again will I buy new internal combustion engine.' If we put enough of this kind of pressure on Detroit, they'll solve the auto pollution problem for us."

"Same thing with gasoline. We've got to stop buying tetraethyl lead in our gasoline. But for now the Ethyl Corporation's got us by the balls – while the sky becomes more and more of a sewer."

Herbert picks up an orange and holds it out dramatically. "If you take this and paint it with shellac, that thin coat of shellac is the equivalent of our atmosphere. And there is no cleansing process built into it…"

"Our ecologists say we're only twenty years away from irreversible effects on the environment," he goes on. "But it could happen a lot sooner than that. Wreck just one tanker carrying defoliants to Vietnam and you destroy seventy percent of the bio-systems on the surface of the ocean – and most of our oxygen renewal depends on the oceans. If one jerk in the Pentagon can put the whole population of earth in peril, that means the government's power is all askew – it clearly shouldn't be in the hands of those who've demonstrated they

keep making the same mistakes again and again."

"Or take those Rhine River time bombs of DDT. We've really got time bombs like that all around us – if one of them finally rusts through, we've got a biological disaster."

Herbert frowns, then adds, "Underlying all these things we're talking about is the idea that we can invent a better world." Think of the ecological and philosophical texture of *Dune* and you'll understand that Frank Herbert is talking to himself, too, when he concludes glumly: "That could be fiction…"

So far there's not much in the environment of the Seventies to be optimistic about. But perhaps the world will muddle through. Merely by its existence – but especially as its number of readers grow – the science fiction masterpiece *Dune* suggests the small but hopeful possibility that man *can* learn from his ecological mistakes. I'd rather believe the author of *Dune* when he writes, in that rich, exciting, wondrously beatify novel, "Life – all life – is in the service of life."

Source:

S.F. Echo Magazine, 1972

by Walker, S.F. Echo #25, Apr-Aug 1976

June 6, 1972

Dear Mr. Walker: Now – back to stuff like your letter. Everything got shuffled aside while I produced an 85,000 word novel on deadline – 7 weeks from contract to mailing ms. If I sound a bit wrung out, you'll understand, I'm sure.

Q-1 (background etc.): Born Tacoma, Washington. Oct 8, 1920; one sister. Most of my education after high school has been a product of research for writing, although I do have an extensive private education in psychology (mostly Jungian). I attended the University of Washington, but didn't graduate. Didn't want a degree, only what they could provide me for writing. I began reading SF in late 40s, started writing it and selling in early 50s. There were some other pulp sales ahead of this and some slicks (short stories with adventure/machismo theme). I went through a very fast Hemingway phase – very phoney and it put me off. This business is nothing new, though. I announced to my family on the morning of my eights birthday that I was going to be "an author". So help me, I've never really lost sight of that a announcement since one of my biggest assets has been an understanding wife – who puts up with me when I'm grumpy-while-writing, answers a lot of my mail, does all of my

filing, keeps our books and acts as a receptionist (keeping intruders off me while I'm at the typewriter). We have two sons – both out of the nest; youngest 21, oldest 25. I also have an older daughter by a previous marriage.

Q-2 (advice on writing etc.) "Make it New". (Ezra Pound.) My own advice: Hone whatever talent you have with the aim of using the language and not letting it use you. The language is the writer's tool, the way a saw-plane-etc. serve the carpenter.

Q-3 (origin of *Dune*, etc.) The original idea grew out of a magazine article which required me to research dune control at Florence, Oregon. I'd been gestating an idea for a story on the avatar complex in human society and the two just naturally fitted together. There followed about six years of collecting material in filing folders, rounding out the characters, etc. JWC [John W. Campbell, Jr.] did not see *Dune* until it was completed, did not even know about it until then. About the only persons who did know about it while it was being written were my wife and Jack Vance. After JWC saw *Dune* and accepted it, he made some suggestions for the serial breaks which I wrote at his behest, but made no inputs at all on the story itself. He took it as it was. As you can imagine, this was a glorious surprise to me because I'd been gambling – length, subject matter, complexity, etc. Vance was very pessimistic. "It's probably too long." I'd just told him it was running a couple of hundred thousand words.

Q-4 (*Under Pressure*) This grew out of my mental search for a physical metaphor to fit the pressures of the world and allow me a metier to begin expressing some of the things I'd learned about

human motivation. I also wanted to tell an adventure story which would express possible consequences of some of the more far-out technological development lines which I could see then. Incidentally, to prepare for the story, I actually built a model of the carrier to test it in Puget Sound. It worked, too. A British corporation (Dracone Ltd.) subsequently was formed to exploit the concept and they admit quite openly that they got the idea from *Under Pressure*. (Which was my original title. *Dragon* was something Doubleday asked for when they turned down the original title. I offered it, but didn't prefer it.) Here, again, JWC did not know anything about the story until my agent submitted it. This has generally been the way I've worked. I don't seem able to do the assignment bit as well as an original which I complete before submitting. This was true of the novel I've just mailed off to Bantam. It was supposed to be based on *The Hellstrom Chronicle*. I wrote the story, but only after an agreement that I would incorporate THC material into an original which was already plotted and sitting in outline in my desk drawer. In other words, I adapted my original slightly to make it possible to put the THC title on it.

We're leaving in less than two weeks for Pakistan, South Vietnam and other waypoints in the Near and Far East. Purpose: agricultural research on a foundation grant. We'll be back in late August if you want to take this up then under the same conditions.

Regards, (s) Frank Herbert

Source: http://www.jacurutu.com/viewtopic.php?f=21&t=1043&start=75#p109314

Vertex Magazine, 1973

by Paul Turner, Vertex Magazine, Volume 1 Issue 4, 10/1973

TURNER: What got you started in science fiction?

HERBERT: Well, you can't pin a thing like that down firmly and get all the parameters of it, but I would say it was the fact I have a wild imagination and I really saw, back in the early fifties, that science fiction, very likely. is the mainstream. That everything else is kind of an attendant time-bound piece of science fiction. What I am saying is that science fiction has much more elbow room than other kinds of fiction. You can do much more interesting things, more widely divergent things, in science fiction than you can in mainstream fiction. This is not to put down mainstream fiction in any way. Each has its own function in our society and always will, I hope. You choose what you want to use for a particular kind of story, and in the early fifties I felt like writing science fiction. That's how I got started in it.

TURNER: Had you been reading science fiction before that?

HERBERT: Well, I didn't cut my teeth on science fiction. I began reading science fiction, I would guess, in the forties, the early forties.

I'd been reading science fiction about ten years before I decided to write it.

TURNER: Who were your favorite authors?

HERBERT: Well, I did read some Heinlein. I shouldn't really tie it down to ten years because I had read H. G. Wells. I'd read Vance, Jack Vance, and I became acquainted with Jack Vance about that time. Jack came along about six months or so after I'd decided to write science fiction. I heard he was in the area where I was living, and just walked in on him one day. We wound up, about six months later, our two families, going to Mexico. We lived in Mexico for a while and plotted several stories together. We're still very close friends. I read Poul Anderson. You know, we could list names here for a long while. I read the field when I started writing it. I wanted to see what was being done.

TURNER: What were you doing at the time you started writing science fiction?

HERBERT: I was a newspaper editor, but I was also writing fiction. I was writing short stories. I decided very early I was going to write fiction. I came down to my birthday breakfast on my eighth birthday and announced, formally and portentously, to my family that I was going to be an author. My mother still treasures several hand-scribbled, badly misspelled, early eight-year-old attempts at fiction. One of them doesn't have a bad lead on it. Even now I can

appreciate that I had the sense to put a narrative hook on the beginning of a story, even at age eight.

TURNER: *Dune* is probably your most well-known science fiction novel.

HERBERT: Yes.

TURNER: What caused you to write *Dune*?

HERBERT: Well, I had been nurturing the idea to write a treatment of the messianic impulse in human society for a long while, and my technique is to collect material. I collect file folders of material. A character idea interests me, and I put that in a folder appropriately labeled. Along the way I went to Florence, Oregon, to do an article about the U.S. Department of Agriculture's test station there, on the control of sand dunes. The U.S. pioneered in the control of sand dunes by planting specially developed grasses and other plants to hold a dune in the wind. You see, a sand dune is just a kind of fluid, only it takes longer for it to move. It creates waves that, when you see them from the air, are analogous to waves m a sea.

TURNER: A slow-motion sea.

HERBERT: Yes, that's right. So, I did this magazine article and I started collecting material on the control of sand dunes. That lead me into ecological matters what we were doing to the planet. One day I woke up to the fact that I had a filing drawer full and that I just couldn't do anything else but write that book. So I sat down and I plotted a much longer work than *Dune*.

TURNER: *Dune* is a pretty long work to begin with.

HERBERT: I know! It was much longer. I cut it up into three parts, and held out more than a third of it for the first book. I sat down and took about a year and a half putting it together, writing it. My reports from the New York market were very poor and my treatment by some of the publishers back there was just outrageous. Then I went back, even before I knew that *Dune* was being so successful, and wrote *Dune Messiah*, which was planned as a pivotal book, pointing both backward and forward, because I had a long range concept of the treatment of this messianic impulse in human society. I'm at work on the third and last one, which will probably turn out to be as long as *Dune*. How soon I can finish it, I don't know, because life and other immediate and urgent jobs keep intruding. But I'll get to it and I'll get it out, probably this year.

TURNER: Do you have a title for it?

HERBERT: No. I have a working title, but I try not to talk about work in progress. My advice to any writer is not to use the energies of

creation in talking about what he's working on; put it into the typewriter. You use the same energies to talk about your work that you use to write it. So I'm very cagey on these things, very secretive, and I hold all this back and then when I sit down at the typewriter it sort of pours out.

TURNER: Talking about your technique, are there any special requirements that you use to write? For instance, do you need special environments?

HERBERT: Oh, I think we all need special environments for various things we do. A writer needs time, uninterrupted time, with the tools of his trade: paper and a writing instrument of some kind. Jack Vance uses pencil or pen. I think he has a rather interesting technique. He uses various colored pens; he has a dish of them beside him. When he gets tired of blue he writes with green, or red, or orange, or black. I use a typewriter. I think that's the newspaper training. I learned to type at about age fourteen and I touch-type. You train the thoughts to come out of the ends of your fingers in this particular mechanical way. I think you get a kinesthetic link right through the body. The thought comes into your head and goes right through your hands onto t he paper, you see. So I need a place where I can sit down and not be interrupted for at least four hours a day, or six, and often much more.

TURNER: Do you write long hours when you get inspired?

HERBERT: Oh, I don't wait for inspiration. I just sit down and work at creating the thing that has interested me from the start. The three books of the *Dune* series still interest me very much because of the way these impulses form in the organism we call human society.

TURNER: There've been a lot of changes in our human society, our human culture, since you first wrote *Dune*. Are you incorporating these changes?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. The book is being changed by experience. A man is a fool not to put everything he has, at any given moment, into what he is creating. You're there now doing the thing on paper. You're not killing the goose, you're just producing an egg. So I don't worry about inspiration, or anything like that. It's a matter of just sitting down and working. I have never had the problem of a writing block. I've heard about it. I've felt reluctant to write on some days, for whole weeks, or sometimes eve n longer. I'd much rather go fishing, for example, or go sharpen pencils, or go swimming, or what not. But, later, coming back and reading what I have produced, I am unable to detect the difference between what came easily and when I had to sit down and say, “Well, now it's writing time and now I'll write.” There's no difference on paper between the two.

TURNER: That sounds like it might stem from your early newspaper experience, where you had to write regardless of the conditions or how you felt.

HERBERT: Yeah, you sit down and you just have conditioned yourself to: now it's writing time and you have a deadline sitting out there somewhere and you're going to do the very best you can right here at this moment: and so you do it.

TURNER: What other things are you writing now, besides the last of the *Dune* novels?

HERBERT: Well, I've been doing the narrative script for a documentary about the navy demonstration flight team, the Blue Angels. It attracted me because it wasn't a conventional documentary; it wasn't just 'here we're going to do some groovy things flying." I am a pilot, so I was interested from the flying point of view, but I was also interested because here were these fellows flying very hot aircrafts and doing extraordinary things with them, and it struck me that they didn't really know what they were doing. They knew flying; they knew they were doing a great thing and they were getting all this elation out of it, but they didn't understand their relationship to themselves and the airplane and the rest of the world. What they were demonstrating to people was that a human being could actually do these really extraordinary things: flying two aircraft towards each other, for example, at a closing speed of eighteen hundred feet a second. You think about that eighteen hundred feet a second and pass within three feet of each other. They train themselves so that the aircraft flies them as much as they are flying it, only we had to tell them that they were doing this. They thought they were controlling the aircraft, you see. The idea of absolute control is a hang up of Western culture. It is built into our language; it's part of the verb to be: “Well, you either do it or you don't!” It's the old Cartesian dichotomy – the separation between body and mind.

Well, there is no separation between body and mind.

TURNER: You talked earlier about the world culture, a composite of all the cultures on the Earth. Apparently you've thought about this at some length. Do you see lines, trends, things that are common to all cultures, a trend that this culture is following now?

HERBERT: Well, I don't see trends if you're thinking of “where are we going,” but I see many, many influences which are going to be mutually interactive, creating something new. Of course, you can talk then about certain things that are going to happen. I think that, barring a tremendous breakthrough in energy sources. which is always a possibility (it's our hope, our belief in miracles, you see), we are going to see animal dieback in human populations in some areas of the world. Specifically, in at least one area, I have other areas in mind, but the island of Java, which I visited last summer, now has a population of more than 80 million effectively living on land which is about the size of one-third of the state of Washington… 80 million people. They have urban density in the countryside. Now, they do not occupy all of the available land on Java, all of the available surface, but some of it is non-usable for human purposes under present circumstances. So, again barring some tremendous breakthrough in energy and food sources, an animal dieback will happen there because they are doing nothing about their growing population. They still have one of the largest population growth rates in the world. Now, and let's be conservative about it, if they double their population before the year 2000 that land will not be able to support them with present energy sources. It is barely able to support them now. So they are very close to a crash, to a population crash. Now, I think that the rest of the world

will effectively be helpless in the face of it. You could not get enough food there and if you did you would only exacerbate the problem if you just gave food.

TURNER: Why is that?

HERBERT: Because the pressures on a society, the pressures of danger, including the pressures of starvation, tend to increase the population. There is a thrust of procreation.

TURNER: That's what happens during war times.

HERBERT: Yes, we come out of a war with more population than when we go into it, despite the losses in the war. So I am predicting that Java is going to experience a population dieback, a population crash, within at most fifteen years. That's going to have one hell of an effect on the rest of the planet. Not just the inability to cope with it in conventional terms; that is, produce food and give it to them, or whatever. But people are then going to look inward, at their own populations. Whole societies are going to look inward at their own efforts. I really believe that what we popularly call 'the change in morality,' that is, sex as recreation rather than procreation, is a social effort to cope with the necessity to limit the population and still deal with sexual drives.

TURNER: So it's a high speed evolution.

HERBERT: Yes, I see it that way. Japan has been able to deal with its rate of growth rather dramatically. I see the same sort of thing happening in the United States. I do not see the same sort of thing happening in Muslim countries or in Latin America. Latin America is another area we want to look at in this respect, where the potential of population crashes exists because they are failing to deal with the problems in the face of the necessity to do so. If they do not limit population they must find out her ways to deal with the increase, you see.

TURNER: To get back to science fiction, what do you feel is the role of science fiction? Do you feel that science fiction can help, or is helping to solve some of these problems?

HERBERT: I think science fiction does help, and it points in very interesting directions. It points in relativistic directions. It says that we have the imagination for these other opportunities, these other choices. We tend to tie ourselves down to limited choices. We say, “Well, the only answer is…” or, “If you would just…” Whatever follows these two statements narrows the choices right there. It gets the vision right down close to the ground so that you don't see anything happening outside. Humans tend not to see over a long range. Now we are required, in these generations, to have a longer range view of what we inflict on the world around us. This is where, I think, science fiction is helping. I don't think that the mere writing of such a book as *Brave New World* or *1984* prevents those things which are portrayed in those books from happening. But I do think

they alert us to that possibility and make that possibility less likely. They make us aware that we may be going in that direction. We may be contriving a strictly controlled police culture. B. F. Skinner worries the hell out of me. He is right out of Huxley. He is standing there like a small boy saying, “Please let me have a world like this because I feel safe in it!” He is saying, “I want to control it.” He may be very accurate in his assessment that our total society is going in that direction and that maybe he is opting for the lesser of numerous evils, in his view. But what kind of a society would that produce?

TURNER: We'd like to touch on some of the personal aspects of your life. You mentioned earlier that some of your hobbies included electronics. What are some of the other things that you do for recreation?

HERBERT: I like to do cabinetry; I like to do things with my hands when I'm not writing. I feel that I'm getting as far away as I conveniently can from the activity of sitting at a typewriter and putting words on paper by doing these other things. It's helpful to me; it's a kind of a catharsis. I garden. I have six and a half acres in the northeast corner of the Olympic peninsula in the state of Washington. I am in the process of developing what, I hope, will be a demonstration plot of land in which the demonstration will be that one can live a relatively high quality of life without an enormous, irreplaceable energy drain. I am going to do some hand work on the land. I shovel dirt and move rocks. I am in the process of creating a very small lake/pond/marsh combination by staggering the depth of it. I am going to plant wild rice and a new upland rice which has been developed for high altitude use in the Philippine Islands. I am not one of those people who believes in the “hot” gospel of ecology

that man should keep his hands off the land. I believe that when he changes the land he ought to do it with an eye to the future, and with a little loving care so that when he has finished changing the land something is there that is more sustaining than what was there before. I will be able to plant trout in this pond and frogs and that sort of thing. It will attract birds that feed on the rice. That's why I'm planting it there. I'm going to build a kind of meeting house there – a guest house for friends to come and have seminars and that sort of thing so that we can rap and exchange ideas. I hope to build it out of stabilized adobe, which is a very fine insulating material. As I dig the adobe out of the ground it will provide me with a basement in this guest house. Some of the land we scoop back for this lake-cum-pond will also provide us with adobe. I felt I had to put my hands where my mouth was. I was going around speaking about these things and it's one thing to say, “We ought to be doing,” and it's another thing to just go ahead and do it and say, “Well, this is the way I think we ought to do it and here is the example. I wasn't right about this aspect of it. I found that to do this particular thing my original approach had to be modified this way.” This is what we always find out when we get our hands dirty. The element of doing it always teaches us much more. That is one of the hangups of education.

You wanted to know more about my personal life I've been teaching at the University of Washington up until the last quarter. Now I've taken a two year leave.

TURNER: What courses were you teaching?

HERBERT: I was teaching a lecture course called *Utopia/Dystopia*, which was an examination of the myth of the better life; how we

carry it in our heads. We don't do anything without resorting to this myth: growing hair on our faces, our choice of friends, the clothing we wear, the kind of government we choose, who we say is the best leader, who we say is a bad leader. We don't go into a voting booth without taking this myth with us.

TURNER: Have you developed the course materials for this?

HERBERT: I developed the course materials. It struck me that academe is far gone down this long road of “education can be done with power.” Now, all of academe is not down there. We have many, many beautiful people in education who manage to work in spite of the administrative power intrusions. But when you come right down to it, a school is a “person” who has information which works. He can demonstrate that it works and it is people who want to do what this person does. They want to learn how to make things work that way.

TURNER: Do you enjoy teaching this course?

HERBERT: I enjoy it. I teach it on the basis of pass/fail. I have to grade for the system, but I give everybody an 'A'. Grading intrudes on education. It's quite obvious that we are an unique and different species. That being a sexually reproduced species, we are not all equal. Not in our abilities, our desires, or anything else. Each of us is one-of-a-kind. This happens in a class, too. There are people with certain capabilities in one direction which, if you developed a

measuring system in that direction, you could say are better than others; but this effectively blocks what you can learn from everyone in the class. Class ought to be a place where teachers learn, too. I have what I think is a very effective way of measuring whether people are getting anything that I have to give in a class situation, and that's whether I'm getting anything from them. If I'm learning from them I know they're learning from me.

Now, I am not saying by this that we should immediately start medical students on a pass/fail system. Don't read me wrong on this. We have developed a set of parameters for a certain thing. But, we ought to recognize what we're doing, how we have developed those parameters, and how tightly we constrict them so that the end products are supposed to be stamped out the same. Really, this effectively stops development. Somewhere down the line, you have to have a man who can do something that others cannot do and can demonstrate this capability. He will say, “What I can do is this…”

TURNER: He would be transferring that information.

HERBERT: Yes. “Here's how I do it.” Now, obviously, this might not be the only way to do it for all time. It may not be the best way. We may develop far more effective ways of doing these things. But, under a power-oriented society, power adheres to people who have knowledge of how a thing works, no matter how temporary that “working” may be.

TURNER: And the power seldom goes away afterwards.

HERBERT: Well, yes. Power tends to attract power, so that it effectively constricts avenues of development.

TURNER: What would be a way out of that? How could you widen those avenues of development?

HERBERT: Well, if you're not to go to a completely chaotic society, with all the problems inherent in that, and that's not the answer, then we need ways that test the most outrageous concepts.

TURNER: Do you have any idea how that can be done?

HERBERT: It was done under so-called “primitive” conditions by several avenues. The hermit could go out and do his thing. But we're running out of hermit space. The man with an idea that if you cut sections off a log and put a limb through the middle of them and put a load on the limb – you could carry a heavier load, drag it anyway, roll it – that man could just go do it. But our total society has found that if you let the physicists, say, build their wheel and cut their logs – then the resultant product becomes something that is used in a power context and, eventually, maybe a war. Eventually, maybe the destruction of the total planet. In this respect, I'm not as much worried by atomic weapons as I am by the whole structure and how it uses the products which accumulate in it. Far more dangerous to world society, in terms of springing upon us from an

unknown corner, is the ability of a chemist and a pharmacist working in a basement, say, in South Africa to produce a mutated disease that would spread like wildfire throughout the world. Very cheap…

TURNER: Just like the old science fiction stories.

HERBERT: It's very real, and a real potential in our world today.

TURNER: We're really kind of living in a science fiction world today, aren't we?

HERBERT: Yes. I see this very clearly, that all of these things are accumulating around us. There are developments in several fields. There's no way to control these, no effective way to channel them and stop them in terms of present social directives, such as governments and social arbiters. There is no way, for example, to prevent the pharmacist or chemist from working in that basement in South Africa.

TURNER: That's true. Well, don't we really have to find ways to do that in order to survive?

HERBERT: I think we are going at it in the wrong direction. We're thinking of controlling it rather than having a world society where

people just don't want to do that sort of thing, don't want to destroy their fellows.

TURNER: If we could learn how to do that we would have most of our problems solved.

HERBERT: It's not the answer and it's not an easy thing. Part of it is in recognizing the essential humanity, that all other humans are like me in some way. You know, when you come right down to it, a society defines that word, human. We think we know what a human being is. I begin the class by having them define human. I don't say homo sapiens, I don't say I want a medical definition, a physical definition, or anything else. I just say, define it. And, with a little gentle nudging here and there, we come to my assumption, which is that most societies define human as “like me.” If they are sufficiently like me I'll let my daughter marry one. If they are not like me, they are somehow not quite human. They're boks, or niggers, or wops, or chinks. You know, everybody knows, they're not human… not quite. Or they're dirty Indians, or mixed. All you have to do is look at them to see they're not like me. They don't feel things the way I do. So that, if it's necessary, for some reason that I define, to kill off a few of them, well, the world hasn't lost much.

TURNER: Those are hard basic assumptions to overcome.

HERBERT: Right. They are very hard basic assumptions to overcome, because they are ground into our tribal ancestry and they

go so far as, say, a person who works for AT&T and has really "bought it" knows that he is better than somebody who works for U.S. Steel. The guy from U.S. Steel, of course, is just a little less than human, thereby.

TURNER: There are a great many people out there who respect your writings, Mr. Herbert, and your abilities. Would you like to say something to them? To all the young people, especially.

HERBERT: Yes. I would like to tell them to be very careful about finding scapegoats. Technology is not a thing out there to be destroyed, thereby solving all our problems. How far back do we cut it? Do we go back to hand saws and hand axes? Which elements of the technology will we discard? I would say to let their imaginations run free. Go ahead, try to imagine things that would be fun and humorous and whatever, things that would be interesting to make. Do it with an eye to how many ripples these things will create and who those ripples may inundate. Eventually, you have to sing for your supper.

TURNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Herbert.

Source: http://members.lycos.co.uk/Fenrir/ctdinterviews.htm

VERTEX INTERVIEWS FRANK HERBERT

*interviewer/***Paul Turner**

"A writer needs time, uninterrupted time, with the tools of his trade. I think you get a kinesthetic link right through the body. The thought comes into your head and goes right through your hands onto the paper."

VERTEX: What got you started in science fiction?
HERBERT: Well, you can't pin a thing like that down firmly and get all the parameters of it, but I would say it was the fact I have a wild imagination and I really saw, back in the early fifties, that science fiction, very likely, is *the* mainstream. That everything else is kind of an attendant time-bound piece of science fiction. What I am saying is that science fiction has much more elbow room than other kinds of fiction. You can do much more interesting things, more widely divergent things, in science fiction than you can in mainstream fiction. This is not to put down mainstream fiction in any way. Each has its own function in our society and always will, I hope. You choose what you want to use for a particular kind of story, and in the early fifties I felt like writing science fiction. That's how I got started in it.
VERTEX: Had you been reading science fiction before that?
HERBERT: Well, I didn't cut my teeth on science fiction. I began reading science fiction, I would guess, in the forties, the early forties. I'd been reading science fiction about ten years before I decided to write it.
VERTEX: Who were your favorite authors?
HERBERT: Well, I did read some Heinlein. I shouldn't really tie it down to ten years because I had read H. G. Wells, I'd read Vance, Jack Vance, and I became acquainted with Jack Vance about that time. Jack came along about six months or so after I'd decided to write science fiction. I heard he was in the area where I was living, and just walked in on him one day. We wound up, about six months later, our two families, going to Mexico. We lived in Mexico for a while and plotted several stories together. We're still very close friends. I read Poul Anderson. You know, we could list names here for a long while. I read the field when I started writing it. I wanted to see what was being done.
VERTEX: What were you doing at the time you started writing science fiction?
HERBERT: I was a newspaper editor, but I was also writing fiction. I was writing short stories. I decided very early I was going to write fiction. I came down to my birthday breakfast on my eighth birthday and announced, formally and portentously,

Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction, 1975

Sandworms And Saviors, BY Ed Leimbacher, Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction, 05/1975

Frank Herbert believes in what he writes; his lifestyle is the proof.

A selling science fiction author since the early Fifties, Herbert's worldwide fame has really come only in the last six or eight years with the continuing acclaim accorded Dune*, his environment-conscious, worlds-unknown adventure novel, and its sequel,* Dune Messiah*.*

The Dune *books operate on many levels – as pure swashbuckling adventure, as an examination of the messiah figure in religion, as a carefully documented study in world-building (i.e. the effort to turn the desert planet of Arrakis into a greenbelt for man). Moreover, they scrutinize man's feudal societies, court intrigues, and desert mores; represent a consciously literate and literary attempt at quality prose styling; and, with the famous giant Sandworm, even take on some of the trappings of a sophisticated monster story. Other levels may exist too, but you probably get the idea.*

During the same period that Dune *was winning awards and selling more than a million copies, Herbert also became known as an intelligent spokesman for the whole movement towards environmental awareness in America. He lectured widely, wrote numerous essays and introductions to the books of others, and flew back and forth across the nation adding his jovial, somewhat overwhelming presence to government conferences and college*

seminars.

At 54, Herbert is a barrel-chested, hearty and hairy fellow, looking something like a sandy-haired Santa Claus. The length of his beard may fluctuate, but his mustache stays truly monumental – a veritable Jerry Colonna-styled soup-strainer jutting from his upper lip like a wiry plant on an Arrakeen sand-slope.

A newspaperman of repute for many years, Herbert is also a licensed pilot, commercial photographer, a 16mm. filmmaker, and Muad'Dib-knows-what-all-else. With the money from Dune *and his many other fine SF novels, Herbert recently purchased six acres in the northeast corner of Washington State's Olympic Peninsula. He and his wife Bev arc slowly turning this sloping woodland into their own closed ecological system, a small self-supporting haven for the Herberts and whatever friends may come to visit or life.*

When my wife Sharon and I visited them one afternoon last August, we found Frank stripping the pea-vines in his garden; he proudly took us on a tour of the man-made pond, hexagonal chicken house, and landscaped woods surrounding the Herberts' airy and handsome cedar-wood A-frame.

He spoke eagerly of the plans for each gadgets and environmental tools he would soon install – like the windmill to generate electricity

Sharon later asked him, tongue-in-cheek, what he intends to do when he finishes "playing with all these toys." His answer exemplifies the elan with which Frank Herbert embraces life and attacks the blank waiting paper in his typewriter: "Get some new toys, of course!"

SF: When did you first start writing, Frank?

HERBERT: Oh, I started writing when I was eight years old. When my mother came here recently to live with us, I saw one of those originals that she had saved. It was fascinating to me to go back after all these years and see that, at eight years old – although it was very ham-handed – I had a narrative hook and I was dealing with the emotions of the people, the primary force, rather than trying to make everything intellectually satisfactory. Even then I knew it, evidently instinctively.

SF: When did you become a professional writer?

HERBERT: I sold to the pulps when I was still in my teens. And then I got into newspaper work; I got married and I needed a regular check. Because damn few teenage writers support themselves well. I sold before World War II, but my real magazine-selling period came shortly after WWII, about 1947. I would write six hours a day and work eight hours a day for a newspaper. And I'd write on weekends.

SF: What sort of pulps are you talking about?

HERBERT: Oh, adventure short stories, *Doc Savage*, that sort of

thing.

SF: Oh yeah? *Doc Savage*? Under your name?

HERBERT: The only thing I ever used a pseudonym for was Westerns. Don't ask me *what.* [Laughs]

SF: Juvenilia you want to lose, eh?

HERBERT: I was learning; it's a good place to learn. Then I started selling to some of the slicks – *Esquire*, that sort of thing. Early Fifties I started writing ecological articles, and then I wrote *Dragon in the Sea* – in '54, I believe: I think it was first serialized in '55. From then on, I was writing mostly science fiction.

SF: Did *Dragon* grow out anything in particular?

HERBERT: It grew out of what I saw happening to our use of fossil fuels. You see, I wrote my first ecological article about oil shortages of oil and that sort of thing in 1952.

SF: You were a little ahead of the game.

HERBERT: A little bit – 20 years or more. But it's interesting to me to note that all the writing I did, including *Dragon In the Sea*, didn't do one fraction as much to tell people what the hell was going on as the past six months of living with the shortage. *Then* you learn it; you're in it.

SF: What about the Cold War? Was a factor in *Dragon*?

HERBERT: That was a factor. I believe there are cyclic functions to this kind of international collision. We're in a process of softening of this kind of international friction. But I think that we'll go back into a hardening period later. And then, with any luck at all, we'll have another softening period.

There are just certain kinds of paranoia that function on an international scale – sometimes for good reason. You know, there *are* people who say: "Let go get our neighbors!" This is why I get upset with people who want to go thru complete unilateral disarmament.

SF: That strikes me as strange, in relation to your activities in the *World Without War Council*.

HERBERT: Oh, I think that if we could get that going internationally,

that would be one of the best defusing processes that could be developed, because it would go right to the root of the things which feed this paranoia. You see, people are then *talking* to each other, and if you're really neighbors and are helping each other – for example, one of the best things that could happen to this world is for the Soviet Union to become completely dependent on our wheat, and us to become completely dependent on their natural gas.

Anything that gets the dialogue out of those characteristics which feed the paranoia and get down to really physical things, where we're interdependent and have to realize it, is a good thing. We are interdependent anyway, but you have to *prove* it to people. We're a colony of boll weevils living in a jar of corn meal, and there *are* limits.

SF: What was the response to *Dragon*? Were you an overnight success, so to speak?

HERBERT: Oh, no, the New York literati, the critics there, panned the book. But it's now considered a classic and has just been reissued under the original title, *Under Pressure*.

SF: Did you turn straight from that to the work that led to *Dune*?

HERBERT: No, I did a lot of short stories, novelettes… I did things like receiving a magazine cover from a publisher in New York: "We've just bought this cover and we'd like a story to justify it."

SF: How well did those kinds of assignments work?

HERBERT: There's nothing wrong with doing that; they're all exercises of the imagination. When we did *Five Fates*, five of us used the same opening, the same characters; the first several pages are identical, yet five more different stories you could not find. So it's just a way to get into it.

But I was doing the research which eventually became *Dune* in the Fifties as well. It isn't right to say that I researched it for more than six years, because that sort of implies that's *all* I did. But I did research it over a period of more than six years.

SF: What kicked it off in general?

HERBERT: Well, I collect material in filing drawers. I was writing for news magazines and reporting, mostly feature stuff. And I was doing some photography as well. In those days a photographer and writer could wear the same hat.

But I was collecting material and kind-of had it in the back of my head to do a novel concerned with the messianic thrust in human society – how messiahs originate, and what we do with 'em. And I collected a great deal of material – studied comparative religions, had a lot of things in a whole half of a filing-cabinet drawer. About this time, still very much interested in ecological matters, I had gone to Florence, Oregon, where the U.S. Department of Agriculture had

what was probably the world's pilot project on the control of dunes. We solved it: how you hold a dune, keep it from covering a house or a road or a forest. And all of the primary work was done down there. Israel, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, India, Chile, all sent people here to learn from us how we did it.

SF: Why was this going on in Oregon?

HERBERT: Because there were huge sand dunes on the coast down there, with a small town, Florence, which would support the staff. Everything was conducive to this kind of pilot project – learning what kind of things would grow in sand, where you planted 'em, how they held the sand against the wind. You see, sand is just a slow-motion wave when you've got enough wind, when it's loose enough and you've got enough wind to move it.

SF: How large were the dunes?

HERBERT: Oh, some of 'em 80, 90 feet tall. But USDA learned how to solidify them there with growth and make wind-breaks out of 'em. which is essentially one of the first stopping actions which you can engage in to hold an area against the encroachments of desert sand. So I went down there, flew over the area and took aerial photographs, went down and talked to the people, and did a series of magazine articles on the importance of this research. And all that went into another filing folder: it also got me interested in what things we were doing to reclaim deserts, what causes deserts, and how we

recover from those causes.

Lots of people think that climatic changes bring about deserts, but that's not the *primary* cause. There's more rainfall in the Negev right now than there was in the days of Solomon when it was a lush growing area. No, *man* made that desert. Man and camels and goats.

Goats are desert makers. When we were in Pakistan a few years ago, we did a kind of head count on the national census of goats and how they let the goats run free in the countryside. They're browsing animals, you know. We figured that the goats in Pakistan at that time were making desert at the rate of about ten million acres every eight years.

SF: Sounds like we need an effort to stomp out goats.

HERBERT: Not so much that as to stamp out the practice of letting them run free, not keeping them coralled or bridled in some way so they won't eat out the trees. I've watched them climb a tree and girdled it. I took photographs showing them doing this.

Anyway, I started collecting all this material about desert-making and the recovery of deserts, and suddenly it occurred to me – late bloomer that I am – that most of messianic religions have come from what I would call "hard-scrabble" area – not necessarily desert, but areas where population on the land was heavy, where there were deserts at least on the fringes of the population, or where people were actually *in* the desert as they were in the Middle East.

So I thought in terms of putting these two packages of research

material together. And immediately I saw that it was bigger than one book, so I plotted *three* books. I was going to write all three of them before turning any one in. But then I saw that it could probably be *four* books, and I had two of them written then.

So I submitted the first two to John Campbell at *Analog*, and that's what John published as *Dune* (under the names "*Dune World*" and "*Prophet of Dune*"). So *Dune,* the book, is actually two shorter books. I wrote the third one, *Dune Messiah*, adhering strictly to the original thrust of my plotting. It was a pivotal book pointing forward and backward – what happens to a messianic religion when it gets power, how they use their power, how does power feed back and affect the society that holds it.

Anyway, I wrote *Messiah* out of that original plot, and then a lot of other things intruded – demands on my time, demands to write this and that – so there was a long hiatus between that part of *Dune* and the fourth book. I've just recently gotten back to it; I had to re-plot it because I had learned a lot of things in the meanwhile. I'm changing it to fit what I learned.

SF: *Son of Dune Messiah* – we can look forward to it someday?

HERBERT: It's more than half-thru.

SF: Can we talk now about the various ecological and literary levels of *Dune*?

HERBERT: Well, the book was not so much written as it was *composed*. Both it and *Dune Messiah* were written in that same fashion, which means that you have quite a number of threads going thru them. There's a thread, for example, of color-keying – where you have an obvious emotional input early in the book, the colors associated with that are recalled later, just a little blip of them, to elicit the reminiscence of the first instance.

In camera terms, choice of close-up and extreme close-up – what you select, a person's hand, his finger, his eyes, this is brought back the same way; there's a thread of this all the way thru the book. There is a very heavy emphasis on the kinds of rhythm that are elicited in each part – where you want to speed up the action, it's short sentences, action verbs; where you want to slow it down and savor it, where you're rolling thru something that's going to build to a crescendo later, it's involved sentences, the verb “to be” much in play, and longer rhythms.

And then the whole structure of the book was built on a slow rhythm building to a crunch point, then a little faster rhythm building to a crunch point, a little faster building to a crunch point, and so on, all the way thru.

SF: What about all the songs and excerpts from histories?

HERBERT: Of course, I was writing the books for a Western culture, and had the audience very much in mind. And in this culture, when you say “desert,” the automatic assumption is *Arab*. So I went to Arabic for most of my names and language forms, for many things.

But what I did was, I used a self-constructed elision process to change some of the words the way words do change across centuries. For example, the English we speak today is not the English of Shakespeare. When Shakespeare said someone was “honest,” he meant they were “virginal.” To “make an honest woman” out of somebody was to restore her good name, the good name that goes with virginity.

So I went thru this process in the structural changes of words and labels and sentence structure to elicit – you see, I couldn't keep saying “dry, dry. dry, dry” all the way thru. But I could elicit that in the mind of the reader, so that you're *in* there feeling it – you're supplying the pictures yourself. I wanted a feudal structure to the society, so I went back to Provençal lyrics for all of the songs; they came right out of a feudal society, and I wrote them in that style, actually had songs in mind. The same emphases are in the excerpts from histories.

SF: But they also have the *religious* overtones.

HERBERT: Oh yes, but before we get off the feudal subject – I think that the feudal structure is a recurrent theme in human societies. We have a lot of feudatories around us right now. You look at a corporation – it's set up as a feudatory. Look at a government bureaucracy or any single bureau, it's set up the same. It has to do with the chain of command and how it applies. Maybe it goes back to our tribal origins; I suspect that it does.

SF: Let's get back to the “messianic thrust.”

HERBERT: Be very careful when talking about cause and effect. I think there's more of a Taoist flavor in my approach to it. There is this kind of background to the messianic prophet: there are conditions which a large segment of the population defines as either intolerable or borderline intolerable. They can be physical conditions of the surroundings – drought, that sort of thing – or they can be, as they are more often, the imposition of tyranny. There is a background of questioning philosophy – that is, the kind of questioning that goes to such questions as: *Why am I here?* Which may be a nonsense question. [Laughs]

SF: [in godlike tones] *Because*.

HERBERT: But it's asked over and over and over! Maybe what we should be asking is: *How?*

You get these inputs into the society. And then you get a thing which we call *prescience*, which may be an accumulation of *petits perceptions*, of small bits of data which a person assembles unconsciously, coming to what he interprets as an intuitive understanding of the condition he's in. However it happens, the person involved sees the future of the course that his society is on, that *he* is on, pretty clearly.

I saw, for example, in '52 that we were going to come to a crunch with fossil fuels. It didn't do any *good* to see it. I mean, I could be John crying in the Wilderness, for all the good it did. I don't classify myself as a prophet, but I use this as an example of one of the

functions that a writer *can* fulfill in today's society which *used* to be filled by prophets and messiahs. “You keep that up, boy, and you're going to come to a bad end!” [Laughs]

And the other thing is that the person then goes out and starts telling people about this – there is a *ministry*. Gautama did it, Jesus did it, Mohammed did it.

SF: It's obvious that *Dune* won you much acclaim, aside from immediately winning those major awards, the Nebula and the Hugo. It's continued to sell, been translated…

HERBERT: Into eight languages. Over a million copies sold worldwide.

SF: And has been optioned for the movies for a couple of years now.

HERBERT: Yes. By APJAC. APJAC is Arthur P. Jacobs [producer of all the "Planet of the Apes" movies].

SF: Who is no longer alive.

HERBERT: Who is no longer alive, but his corporation lives on. You

see, *that's* the key to immortality: Don't be human, be a corporation.

SF: Have you seen a script or anything?

HERBERT: No. I know there's a *treatment* done. I'll be handling technical direction, technical matters.

SF: At one time, I think you told me that plans were to shoot the film in the interior of Turkey, in those caves in the mountains?

HERBERT: That's still the plan, as far as I know. It's an area northeast of Ankara, heading towards the border.

SF: And what are the plans for the book's famous *Sandworm*?

HERBERT: That comes under *my* department, and what I'm going to do is labor strenuously to prevent this film's turning into an American version of a Japanese monster movie. You know, “The Worm That Came In from the Desert.”

SF: “And Ate Cleveland.”

HERBERT: That's right. You know Harlan Ellison's famous definition of the monster movie? “The Tapioca Pudding That Had Intercourse with Cleveland?”

SF: Of course, your monster *is* slightly scatological if you get right down to the facts of how he works.

HERBERT: Yes, he's the Creator. You see, I had to get rid of the heat; I had to dissipate the heat of a creature like that going thru sand. There are several ways you could do it – with a lot of water, you could have a cooling system. Or you could do it chemically. So I postulated a chemical factory, and that's where the spice comes from.

So how am I going to *recreate* it? Well, I envisage something more sophisticated, on the order of the Chinatown dragon, but ten times larger and with lots of mechanical assists and people inside to manage it.

SF: Will the movie cover *Dune Messiah*, too?

HERBERT: No, just *Dune*.

SF: *Dune Messiah* takes place ten-twenty years after *Dune*.

HERBERT: Twelve years, actually.

SF: Where does the final book come?

HERBERT: Roughly twenty years after the first book. It's the next generation. Very, very different children from what we tend to think of as a child – unformed mentally and that sort of thing.

SF: What was the result of *Dune*? Did it win immediate acclaim?

HERBERT: Yes, among science fiction fans, and among science fiction authors. It actually won three awards. It shared the International Fantasy Award that year with *Lord of the Flies*. But again, the literary critics didn't read it, or panned it. It never appeared on the official bestseller list, although there was a period of 26 weeks when it was outselling the top of the paperback bestseller list.

SF: Do you think you'll ever tackle another work that large?

HERBERT: Oh yeah, I'm doing it right now. The final book of *Dune*

will be a long one.

SF: In addition to the *Dune* trilogy, you've written many other science fiction novels – *The Green Brain, The God Makers, Hellstrom's Hive*. Many of these at least relate to your interest in ecology.

HERBERT: They all do. I'm still mining the same mine.

SF: But different *veins* within it. The *Green Brain* relates to your banties and insects in a way; it's an attempt to stamp out the strange insect life in the Amazon Basin.

HERBERT: Which is postulated as being the last of the world's wild insects. You know, the indiscriminate spraying of the poison called Sevin in Eastern Washington damn near wiped out the fruit farmers over there, and the orchards – because it wiped out the bees.

SF: So there was no pollination.

HERBERT: That's right. American agriculture has not awakened to the fact that what you do is, you build a supportive ecological system out of which you take your share – which can be the lion's share, an *enormous* share. But in the process you support more humans as

well as more other kinds of life. We're still at the “Oooh, that's a dirty bug” stage.

My latest “insect” book, *Hellstrom's Hive*, had an interesting genesis, by the way. I wrote the book under another name, a book involving a human culture which develops a hive system, a hive structure, with all its specialization and so on. Living right in our midst without the rest of society knowing about it. I had it all written but had not rewritten it, when an editor in New York told me his company had bought the rights to “Hellstrom’s Chronicle” and wanted me to do *Hellstrom's Something* to ride the wave created by the film.

And I said, “No way. I'm not going to do a hack job just to satisfy you. People who like what I write would be put off by that; I'd hurt myself as well as cheat people who pay money to buy a book.”

I was about to leave his office when I had one of those flashes, and said, “Hey, you know, I've got a book already written…” [Laughs]

“I can change the name of the hero and do some minor changes, and you can call it *Hellstrom's Hive*.”

SF: One area we haven't covered is. what brought you back to the Northwest?

HERBERT: Both Bev and I are natives, and I figure that this is one of the few areas that can still be ecologically managed – converted to a balanced system. There are other areas in the world, of course, but this is the one I know. so I came back to do what I could about it.

SF: Obviously, then, you're a revolutionary who truly believes in working “within the system”?

HERBERT: I think it is possible to go at the fulcrum points within the system and change those, redirect things that way. I don't necessarily believe that we *will* do this, but that it's *possible*. And that's a better chance than gun and bomb.

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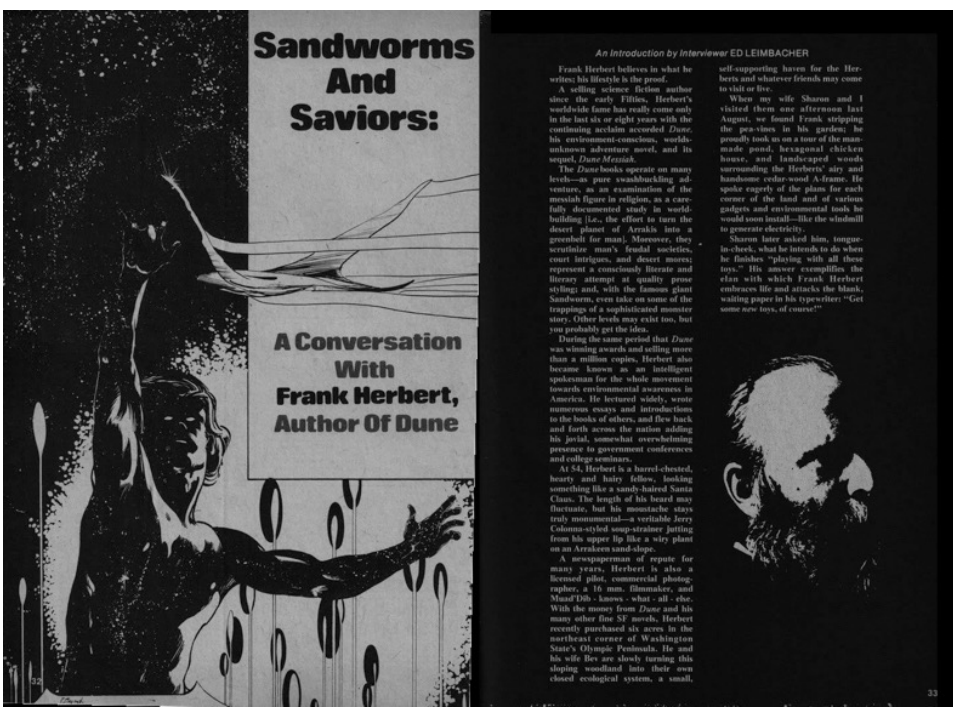
Sandworms And Saviors:
A Conversation With Frank Herbert, Author Of Dune
An Introduction by Interviewer ED LEIMBACHER
Frank Herbert believes in what he writes; his lifestyle is the proof.
A selling science fiction author since the early Fifties, Herbert's worldwide fame has really come only in the last six or eight years with the continuing acclaim accorded *Dune*, his environment-conscious, worlds-unknown adventure novel, and its sequel, *Dune Messiah*.
The *Dune* books operate on many levels—as pure swashbuckling adventure, as an examination of the messiah figure in religion, as a carefully documented study in world-building [i.e., the effort to turn the desert planet of Arrakis into a greenbelt for man]. Moreover, they scrutinize man's feudal societies, court intrigues, and desert mores; represent a consciously literate and literary attempt at quality prose stylings; and, with the famous giant Sandworm, even take on some of the trappings of a sophisticated monster story. Other levels may exist too, but you probably get the idea.
During the same period that *Dune* was winning awards and selling more than a million copies, Herbert also became known as an intelligent spokesman for the whole movement towards environmental awareness in America. He lectured widely, wrote numerous essays and introductions to the books of others, and flew back and forth across the nation adding his jovial, somewhat overwhelming presence to government conferences and college seminars.
At 54, Herbert is a barrel-chested, hearty and hairy fellow, looking something like a sandy-haired Santa Claus. The length of his beard may fluctuate, but his moustache stays truly monumental—a veritable Jerry Colonna-styled soup-strainer jutting from his upper lip like a wiry plant on an Arrakeen sand-slope.
A newspaperman of repute for many years, Herbert is also a licensed pilot, commercial photographer, a 16 mm. filmmaker, and MuadDib - knows - what - all - else. With the money from *Dune* and his many other fine SF novels, Herbert recently purchased six acres in the northeast corner of Washington State's Olympic Peninsula. He and his wife Bev are slowly turning this sloping woodland into their own closed ecological system, a small, self-supporting haven for the Herberts and whatever friends may come to visit or live.
When my wife Sharon and I visited them one afternoon last August, we found Frank stripping the pea-vines in his garden; he proudly took us on a tour of the man-made pond, hexagonal chicken house, and landscaped woods surrounding the Herberts' airy and handsome cedar-wood A-frame. He spoke eagerly of the plans for each corner of the land and of various gadgets and environmental tools he would soon install—like the windmill to generate electricity.
Sharon later asked him, tongue-in-cheek, what he intends to do when he finishes “playing with all these toys.” His answer exemplifies the elan with which Frank Herbert embraces life and attacks the blank, waiting paper in his typewriter: “Get some new toys, of course!”
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People Magazine, 1976

by Jane Estes, People Magazine 08/1976

MARS IS EXCITING, BUT MILLIONS OF READERS HAVE ALREADY VISITED THE FRANK HERBERT'S PLANET 'DUNE'

If Neil Armstrong's arrival on the moon was one giant step for mankind, the Viking I landing on the Golden Plains of Mars is a literary bonanza for science fiction writers.

"You have to stay right up on the edge of what is going on in math, psychology and biophysics – all the hard sciences," says sci-fi author Frank Herbert. "I've followed the NASA findings very carefully. Now the data being gathered by Viking I will give us a new edge. It's all very exciting."

For Herbert fans the exciting news is also the publication of *Children of Dune*, the third and final volume about a technologically advanced people called the Arrakisians who inhabit a desert planet known as Dune. For the Arrakisians, Herbert has created a complex civilization with its own history, language and mythology. Book one, *Dune*, came out in 1965 and was followed by *Dune Messiah* in 1969.

Because he has made ecology a central theme of *Dune* – the

inhabitants have to cope with limited resources on their planet – Herbert became a counterculture hero and *Dune* a cult book. Now being filmed in Europe and North Africa, *Dune* sold more than a million copies and won the World Science Fiction Convention Hugo Award and the Science Fiction Writers of America Nebula Award. His first book, *Under Pressure*, a sci-fi tale which accurately predicted a world-wide oil shortage and suggested a means of getting oil from the sea, was published in 1955 and was co-winner of the International Fantasy Award. Herbert, who has written 20 sci-fi novels in 21 years, is the only writer to win all three science-fiction awards.

A reporter for the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* until 1971, Herbert came across the idea for *Dune* while doing a story on a government experiment to control shifting sand dunes in Florence, Orego "That got me thinking about what we knew about planets and growing things, technology, and how we inflict ourselves on the planet earth." He began extensive research into desert cultures.

Born in Tacoma, Washington, Herbert, now 56, grew up in the Pacific Northwest. In 1946 he met his wife Beverly, in a writing class at the University of Washington. "Bev and I were the only two writers in the class who were selling. For her it was confession stories and for me, pulp adventures."

For the last four years, home for the Herberts' has been a cedar A-frame house on six acres near Port Townsend, Washington. From 6 a.m. to noon Herbert writes in his loft office above the living room. After lunch he turns farmer as part of Herbert's plan to become self-sustaining.

They produce enough vegetables for their own table (and some surplus to give away), keep chickens for eggs and meat and have

stocked a pond with trout. They also are planning to heat their swimming pool with solar energy and to build a windmill for electric power.

Herbert would like to see others follow his example. “It’s not so much a back-to-the-land concepts as it is a back-to-the-use-of-your-own-hands,” he says. “It’s nice, feeling the earth – like Atlas.”

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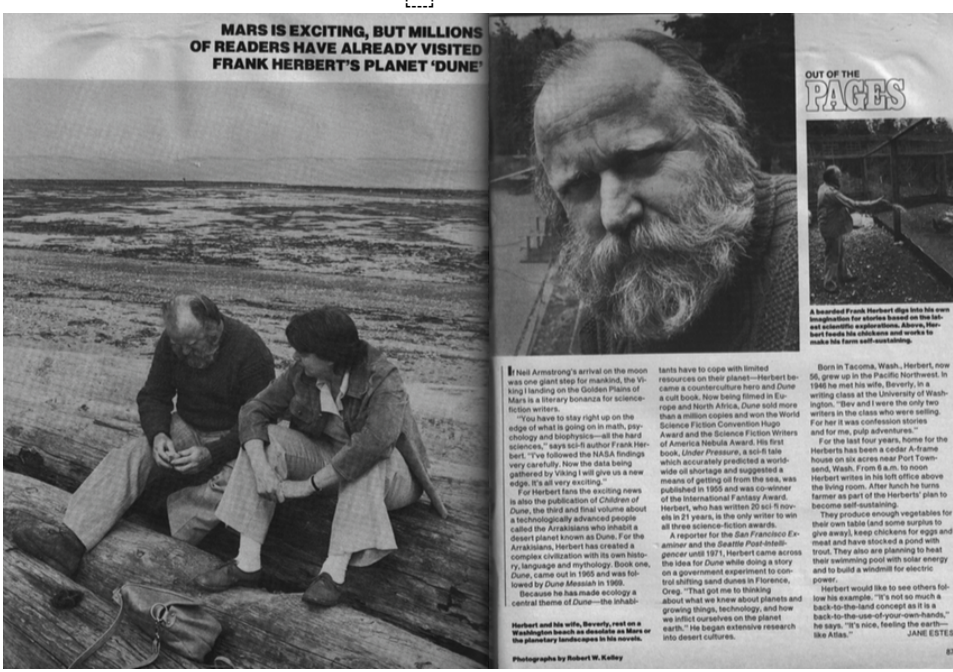

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OUT OF THE PAGES

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Herbert and his wife, Beverly, rest on a Washington beach as desolate as Mars or the planetary landscapes in his novels.

Photographs by Robert W. Kelley

A bearded Frank Herbert digs into his own imagination for stories based on the latest scientific explorations. Above, Herbert feeds his chickens and works to make his farm self-sustaining.

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JANE ESTES

Scintillation Magazine, 1976

by Daniel DePrez, Scintillation, 09/1976

SCIN: I wanted to start out by asking about *Children of Dune*, and how it's doing in sales and acceptance.

HERBERT: I have month old information that more than 47,000 copies have been cold nationwide, in seven printings; that means over 50,000 copies in print. It's on *Publishers Weekly's* best-seller list. On *Booksmith's* it's number two or three, I don't recall.

SCIN: Is this something you expected?

HERBERT: I didn't expect it to go that rapidly and skyrocket. I expected it to do well, because the sales of *Dune* are over a million copies in English; perhaps half that in seven other languages. *Dune Messiah* sold three quarters of a million. You can read from that that there would be quite a few sales.

SCIN: How in the film of *Dune* progressing?

HERBERT: It's been put on the back burner for eight months. The

word I have (I phoned Paris the other day and talked with Jodorowsky) is that they want to tie down a distribution contract before they complete it, but they've already spent more than two million dollars. I saw the script last week for the first time. There's a lot of difference between a script and the development of a script, pictorially, in a movie; but I'm satisfied with the script.

SCIN: Who did the script?

HERBERT: Jodorowsky.

SCIN: How much did he confer with you on the script?

HERBERT: Not a bit.

SCIN: Were there any pre-production conferences?

HERBERT: No. They didn't make any contact with me at all.

SCIN: Was that your idea?

HERBERT: That was their idea. They're afraid of the author usually, the movie-industry is. Because the authors tend to stand around pulling their hair and saying, “Look at what you're doing to my book!” There are damn’ few people who write books that are capable of being made into a film that know the first thing about filmmaking and the problems of translating. It's like translating into a foreign language.

SCIN: It seems the only time you don't have that problem is in a situation like 2001, where Arthur Clarke was writing the book while the film was being made.

HERBERT: That's right.

SCIN: Can you foresee production of *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune*?

HERBERT: Oh, yeah. I'm reasonably sure that if they make this first one, they'll go through a cycle.

SCIN: With Jodorowsky working on them?

HERBERT: I don't know. *That’s* up to the gods.

SCIN: Concerning the messianic impulse existent in the *Dune* Trilogy; do you think Western Civilization in falling away from an impulse of this sort?

HERBERT: I don't think our society is any farther from the messianic impulse than it has ever been. It still believes that heroes are good for you, and that holy heroes are even better. I was just holding that whole concept up to the possibility: maybe 'tain't so. Maybe heroes aren't good for a society.

SCIN: Where can you see this taking us in the near future?

HERBERT: I can see it taking Jimmy Carter into the presidency.

SCIN: Are we then voting more and more for an image rather than a person?

HERBERT: Yes. For a hero. You see, the messiah is just a super-hero. He has God on his side. We get a full spectrum of variations on this theme. Look at the Kennedy Family. You saw the Kennedys take advantage of every myth-making faculty that Western Culture has developed. Who came up with the idea of calling it Camelot? I mean, that's getting pretty culture conscious…

SCIN: Salinger, probably.

HERBERT: Sure, Pierre in a pretty cagey guy. He knows mythology. That's coming very close to it. You can identify all of the mythological figures in that regime. The Witch Mother, the Wise Old Man, the Fool (that's Pierre)… He played the Fool; but not meaning foolish. Meaning the fellow who asks the embarrassing question of the hero. He who gets the laugh with his question, you see.

SCIN: In the past we've gone to sports heroes and politicians for this "building up". Where do you see us going in the future?

HERBERT: Well, there are lots of interesting speculations, but to prepare for them you ought to recognize a few things that we're already doing. For example, in England the major rugby sports teams are geographically identified with the regions which used to be fiefs of their kingdom. In other sport, they carry their banner into the sports arena now rather than into the lists or onto the field of battle.

Where are we going? We're going to continue to look for people who don't make mistakes, which is the essence of the hero. It's what created Kennedy; it created Nixon. We, as a society, created both of them. They participated in it. When you demand that your heroes make no mistakes (and they are, after all, human beings who *do* make mistakes), what they do is cover them up. Johnson covered

his, Kennedy covered his, Eisenhower covered his; because the society demands that the hero make no mistakes. The hero cannot stand up there and say, “Gee, fellas, I blew that one.”

SCIN: When the hero is exposed, or exposes himself, as with Nixon resigning…

HERBERT: The Potomac Flasher. [Laugh] Who exposes himself… okay, go on… I’m not going to explore that one…

SCIN: When these heroes do fall, do we blindly grab out for someone else…

HERBERT: There's always a reaction and a transition, but we always demand the name things from next one. The next person along assumes the mantle of that mythology. That's what I was exploring in the *Dune* Trilogy.

SCIN: Do you think the success and enchantment with the *Dune* books is due to the great amount of ecological homework you did, or was it the treatment of the messianic impulse; or anything else we’ve left unmentioned?

HERBERT: I don't think it was any one thing. I hope the basic

success was due to the fact that they are entertaining. I hope there was some entertainment, because If you're an author, you're in the entertainment business. That's the basis of our business. If you have a pot of message, that can add to it. But if you only have a pot of message, it can get awfully dull. It gets into passive voice and begins to read an awful lot like a medical report. I'm not ready to fix on any one factor for their success; the success is obvious. One factor, I don't think, controls it. Of course, the ecological elements had something to do with it. Ecology was a concern whose time had come. I started writing about that in 1952. We can write, and write and write about these items that deal with the dirt under our feet but, unless each of us individually experiences them personally, the message of the words has very little impact. It had impact after the fact. People say, "Oh, yeah. So-and-no wrote about that, and by God, it's happening!" This in one of the things, I think, stalled science fiction.

When we began to make moonshots, a lot of science fiction writers, in my presence, said that science fiction was through.

SCIN: I've heard that from outsiders, but never thought the writers felt that way.

HERBERT: Oh, I've heard a few science fiction writers themselves Say this.

SCIN: You wouldn't be willing to give any names, would you?

HERBERT: I'm not going to point any fingers, because I met some of them recently and we had our laughs. My own contention is that the essence of science fiction is no restrictions. When someone says, “If we only… ,” or “It can't be done,” that's a challenge to science fiction. We say, “Well, maybe… but, by golly, *if* we did *this*!“

Science fiction is a problem solving category. I think that's the really essential area of its popularity. It appeals to yankee ingenuity; and I believe a lot of industry is beginning to look at science fiction no a resource. It has both its good and bad sides. If they will listen to some of the more outré scenario writing techniques, and learn from these how to predict consequences, it could be very helpful to our society in general. If we go on as usual, which I think we're going to do, making the mistakes of the past, then we're in for some hard times. And there’s going to be no place to hide.

SCIN: In s good deal of your fiction, the setting you choose are environments which are hostile to man, who I should have no right or desire to be in, and must fight for survival. Are you, in writing stories with a setting like that, telling us how good we have it here, having a suitable environment, and how we should preserve it?

HERBERT: We have an environment into which hundreds of thousands of generations of humans have fitted themselves. We adapted to the environment and the environment adapted to us. Then, we became technological. The problem with technology is its timescale. It tends to have a very powerful immediate impact. The usual timescale of the universe does not work that way. One of the reasons we should be in space – the primary reason – is that planets are finite. We can sit here now and say, “Oh, not in my

lifetime." That's true. Not in my lifetime, probably. We should not have just the concerns of our own lifetime. We should have some racial or species concerne.

It does not appear, at thin writing, that humans, in any foreseeable future, will be immortal; but the race *can* be immortal. Only if it is not confined to one planet.

SCIN: There are many people who have mentioned the fact that, even if we were to shoot a spaceship loaded with people into space every five minutes, we couldn't get the entire population of the planet.

HERBERT: Who wants to get the entire population of the planet?

SCIN: That's not the concern?

HERBERT: That's not the concern. No, of course not. You see, the problem is we live in a light-switch society. We expect, flipping that technological item over there, for the lights to go on. If they don't go on, we want to call the super, right?

That's not the way the universe works. Except in catastrophes, it does not have that timescale. Technology has had that impact on our planet. It's a difference in timescale.

SCIN: Then, are you on the opposite end from the early science fiction writers who appeared to worship technology with the dream that men could always use technology to warp the environment to his own needs? Are you and other writers saying we must adapt to the environment rather than the other way around?

HERBERT: Or have a decent concern for posterity. If we are making immediate long range impact on the planet, we often times do this without concern for our grand children to the N_{th} counting (which I hope is infinite). We do it without such concern. I'm just saying it's time we had such a concern.

I'm interested, for example, in this monstrous argument over the use of fission power. I think we are being pushed into some very bad decision by people I would classify an psychopaths. I think it's worthy of note that a significant number of the people who are arguing in favor of fast-breeder reactors are, themselves, childless.

The thing that they are not talking about is the data explosion coupled to the kamikaze impulse in human society. The Secret Service cannot protect a president from a kamikaze. They know this. Likewise, a society cannot build a dangerous artifact and protect it completely from a kamikaze.

The Hanford works, over here on the Columbia River, are like a sword of Damocles hanging over the entire Columbia River Basin downstream, and the area which is touched by the waters of the Columbia River on the coasts of Washington, Oregon and California. The alternatives we are being offered by people who want to go down this technological dead end are all alternatives which would add to the cost – prohibitively to the cost – of such energy. That's nonsense.

I believe there are two factors working to try to get us going for fission power. One is a kind of mechanical fascination that human beings have; it has shiny instruments, and pretty dials and levers. The other in the fact that if you can pass the cost along to an unsuspecting, or a deluded, public then, the hight the capital investment, the greater the profits. These two things are working to get people to choose fission power as though that were our only option. That’s nonsense; that’s a lie. That's not our only option. We have many more options,

SCIN: With elections coming up in November, there’s a measure in Oregon on the ballot for a moratorium on all new nuclear plants of any kind. If that were to pass, the debate would be ended to someone's satisfaction. What would you debate in favor of?

HERBERT: Well, we have numerous alternatives. One is to develop is symbiotic relationship between large urban centers and the agricultural area around them. Such that you use, what are presently waste products, to fuel and fertilize the agricultural area around you for either alcohol, methane, or hydrogen fuel. There are numerous fuels that can be developed from waste and are economically feasible. Another alternative is wind power.

We personally built five models (and right now I'm finishing another novel so I'll have the loot to finish a large one); our resources are limited, but even with our limited resources, I was able to build a windmill, using aircraft technology, that demonstrates without question that this is a very advantageous area to go into.

I wan able to build a wind-mill that you would not have to shutdown in a near hurricane. One which has, high-torque at relatively low wind forces. That means it will be able to do what present-day windmills do not do efficiently. That's with relatively low wind speeds. If you get into areas where we have trade winds, or highly reliable winds such as to and from a desert area, thin becomes a really advantageous way of gathering energy in a non-polluting way. We did it with a relatively low investment.

NASA and the National Science Foundation have been spending millions trying to build something like thin. You can't tell me the thing we centered on and developed, in our own crude way, at our own low cost here, is something they couldn't see. That's nonsense. I don't accuse them of a conspiracy to conceal this kind of development. I just think that we operate unconsciously as a society much as individuals operate unconsciously. It's quite obvious the power merchants of our society don't want us to develop solar energy, or wind energy. Therefore, the money spent to support researchers won't come to anybody who Is suddenly very successful in one of these fields.

SCIN: In the past few years there's been a controversy of the arbitrary titles placed on science fiction writers of old wave and new wave…

HERBERT: Oh, God. I'm not going to get into that argument.

SCIN: Well, I don't want the argument. I was just going to say that in all of the trivial explorations of the subject that I've read, your name never seem to come up on either list. People don't seem to want to classify you as either.

HERBERT: Well, I don't know why. I don't classify myself as either way, anyhow. I think that all literary criticism inevitably taken on certain pretensions. And I don't exclude my own literary criticism. You are being pretentious when you criticize. The only valid criticism… there are two classes of valid criticism. One is history. Does it endure? Will people, ten generations from now, be reading it? I don't know, how will I know? The other is a kind of pre-screening. I find out from experience that there in a critic whose tastes are like mine. He saves me a lot of trouble. If he says it's a good book, chances are I'll find it's a good book. There in so much being written now that that's a useful service. There's a 180-degree out-of-phase version of this. You can find a critic who, if he says it's a good book, you're not going to like it. But if he says it's a bad book, you are. You're just reading him the other way around. These are the uses of criticism, and these are the only really valid uses of criticism. All these labels we attach to current tastes, phases in any artistic development, may be useful for talking about it currently by saying, "He's a New Wave Writer," that saves you a little verbiage. See? That's about the extent of their usefulness.

SCIN: Should writers like yourself, or writers like, for instance, Harlan Ellison who devotes a lot of energy to focusing acceptance or attention of science fiction from the LA Times Book Review Section, saying, “Don’t call it science fiction. Just look at it and if it's good good, if it's not it's not, and don't judge it on the basis of-science

fiction,"…

HERBERT: I think that the energy expended for this would be better spent in writing the kind of science fiction which would gain wider acceptance. I think it's amusing… interesting… fun to do on occasion; to worry about whether it's a ghetto or a country club, but you shouldn't have any profound worries about this. My own feeling is that science fiction is not a ghetto, it's a country club. That it is the over-riding genre and you can subtend all other genre under it, because it is the *wider* genre. But, what the hell, all comparisons break down eventually. When I'm pushed with my back against the wall on it, I always say the difference between science fiction and so-called mainstream is the difference between classical music and jazz. You use the same instruments. You use, more or less, the same notation, and yet one of the fields has a wider range of improvisation than the other. How do you compare them? Which do you prefer?

SCIN: In science fiction you have a chance to make your own forms rather than…

HERBERT: You can improvise. You can, improvise, really, in a jazz way.

SCIN: Just in the past two weeks I've read pieces by Kurt Vonnegut and John Brunner that were about jazz or simply saying, "I like jazz." It seems to be a common thread among science fiction people.

HERBERT: I know or only one science fiction writer who *says* he doesn't like jazz. And I know another science fiction writer, Jack Vance, who in probably one of the world's leading experts on jazz.

SCIN: In essence then, the science fiction writer improvises within forms that are most comfortable to the writer, and someone else comes along and decides to call it science fiction.

HERBERT: That's what academe does. That's my worry about the academics sudden discovery of science fiction. You can analyze the life out of it, analyze all the fun out of it. You can get science fiction writers so damned self-conscious that they lose the improvisational freedom that has been the hallmark of science fiction. This is what happened when we got to the moon. Science fiction writers suddenly became self-conscious; "Gee, yeah, we were saying we could get to the moon. Yeah, golly. Gee, is that the end?"

SCIN: Academics can spoil it for the reader, too. Instead of the student saying, "Gee, I have to have Joyce read by the end of the week," now it' a, "Gee. I have to have Heinlein read by Friday."

HERBERT: Oh, boy. There's nothing worse than telling someone they have to read something to take the fun out of it. You should read something because you enjoy it. Same with music. There's

nothing wrong with learning what a particular composer did, a composer you happen to enjoy, to explore the depths of what he did; depths he might not have even known about. You see, the problem with writing a book, or creating a new wave or an old wave, is that any time you get this “labeled surface“, it’s a surface. Of course, there's something below. The minute you analyze that, you've done nothing more than create a new surface. And of course, there's something blow that. You see? We live in a relativistic universe.

RCM: Gouging by the people I've come into contact with on college campuses, and other people, of the three or four big cult books of the sixties, *Stranger in a Strange Land* was one and, quite possibly, *Dune* was another.

HERBERT: I don't doubt that they were. I think this is true.

SCIN: How do you feel about producing a work, then sending it out into the world, where it grows into this gigantic entity? Is it like being a father and sending a child off into the world?

HERBERT: That's what you do when you write, you know. This is the big hang-up for a lot of people who want to write. They don't want to let go of it, they're afraid of what it will become. A monster, maybe. I try to maintain a balance. I'm amused by some of the things that are done. I'm amused by the cultist fanaticism that has developed around *Dune* and the whole trilogy. And around Heinlein's work, for example. And others. I'm delighted that people

like it. it's nice to be successful. The city of Metz in France, for example, is now planning on a *Dune* Festival – in two years. I don't know whether they'll do it or not.

SCIN: Doing what?

They'll have a science fiction convention at which Dune is the central thing. But if it got too cultist, I don't think I'd go.

SCIN: You might not be part of the cult.

HERBERT: Yeah, I'm not part of the cult. I really am not.

SCIN: when you read a new work by another author, do you have the same sense-of-wonder that you had when you were a youngster reading something back then? Or does the fact that you know most of the writers and writing techniques take away from it?

HERBERT: Well, there is an academic dulling and broadening that occurs when you learn the professional techniques. When you recognize the plumbing, for example, in another person's

writing; why that writer did that sort of thing at that point. However, you always enjoy when other people do it beautifully. So, in a sense,

you have that new wonder when the imagination sparks and you get this scintillating presentation of new ideas. That's lovely to see. In that sense, yes, I do have that same sense-of-wonder that I had when I first began reading.

What you do, I think, in writing a successful book is, you have a decent respect for the dignity and the imaginative powers of your reader. You don't write down to him. You don't spell it all out. You hook the reader's imagination, and allow the reader's imagination that latitude which it deserve to create the images. It's a kind of balancing act that you do. I think that all enduring great writing has this characteristic, It gives you real people, fascinating stories, and it allows you to immerse your imagination in it. It exercises your imagination as a reader.

SCIN: I think it’s unusual that people in academics will throw writers like Shakespeare at you saying, “Here’s an example of great writing; it’s endured over hundreds of years; it’s the state of the art…”

HERBERT: But it is. it is excellent.

SCIN: But then, they will decide to write for a very small coterie of college little-magazine editors.

HERBERT: Oh, full of buzz words!

SCIN: …yet, Shakespeare was writing for the groundlings and the common people, and somehow they seem to lose track of that.

HERBERT: You bet he was. He was writing popular literature, he was writing popular plays. To really appreciate that, you have to recognize that he was writing in, what is to us, a foreign language.

You have to learn that language and then read what he wrote. Beautiful writing. Shakespeare was a man who did exactly what I'm saying here is a hallmark of enduring writing; he appreciated your imagination.

SCIN: You mentioned earlier that you have a new, book you are about to send out to market. This wouldn't happen to be that volume on mythology you were working on a year and a half ago, would it?

HERBERT: No. But I don't talk about work in progress, you know that.

SCIN: Yes, I know.

HERBERT: I'm accumulating material on mythologies and how we create myth structures.

SCIN: is it always a new myth within the same structure, or do we change structures to suit the myth?

HERBERT: I suspect that I can detect a long range movement in the structures, the shifting of the structures. But it's like detecting climate. We, right now, are dominated in our myth structure by myth structures that were dominant in the Middle Ages. The same figures, the some personas.

SCIN: I must admit I wasn't startled to find out you are a member of Planetary Citizens. It only seems logical that you're being involved with such an organization that some of this: thought should spill over into your fiction.

HERBERT: Oh, yes. I think that borders tend to foster destructive isolation and destructive bureaucracies. I think that the real danger in our world right now, the danger to the individual, is the runaway growth of bureaucracy. Which draws most of its members from unimaginative, fearful populations. The real danger in that is that these unimaginative, fearful populations, when they get into positions of power, tend to suppress the creative individual. Because of the runaway growth data, which can be used constructively or violently, it is becoming increasingly mad… dangerous to do injustice to Ana individual. Because we're fast approaching the place where one individual, driven psychopathic by injustice of whatever reason, can destroy an entire city, or a larger area. Think what a madman in a light airplane loaded with plastic explosives could do, diving it into the Hanford storage area. You'd be moving out of

Portland, Oregon very soon thereafter.

SCIN: Do you think repressed people are somewhat self-destructive in nature when they get…

HERBERT: ...repressed? Well, you put pressure on any system, even a hydraulic line, you put enough pressure on it, it's going to break somewhere. And it can break destructively. If the hydraulic line on a heavily-loaded truck breaks at the top of a hill, you're in trouble. It depends on what going on around it, you see?

SCIN: The idea, then, is to relieve as such pressure on individuals since any one individual could be the weak link in the chain.

HERBERT: Or have a concern for what's going on around existing pressures. I think we have to worry about every individual seeking his own level as he sees it, and be ought to have a good reflection from the society of what he sees. We operate this society on an egalitarian myth: that all human beings are created equal. We are not. All individuals are uniquely different. That's our strength. That's our basic strengths; that we are different, and not equal. If we attempt to make all individuals meet some egalitarian norm, that requires suppression and a false interpretation of the gifts of some. Both of which are destructive.

We need a society which is extremely conscious of individual requirements. And a basic individual requirement should be

paramount: that any individual feels that he is doing something useful. That's so obvious.

SCIN: You seem to have lot of experience with "alternative education systems". Do you see a light at the end of the tunnel for education, where people are taught to develop their own unique capabilities, rather than, "Okay, we need four thousand scientists by the end of the year," then crank ‘them all into that category.

HERBERT: I have had three children through the educational system in the United States. I have met, in that process, two teachers who were full-blown sadists, and yet, because of tenure, could not be taken out of their jobs. They were sick. I have met more than a half-dozen teachers who were incompetent; they didn't know the first damn’ thing about teaching. ,They weren't really intelligent enough to deal with ordinary children, let along gifted children. Because of the way we have set up our educational system, as a bureaucracy, there's damned little the society at large can do about this. Except yank your kids out of school and leave the country, which at one point I did.

SCIN: To where?

HERBERT: Went to Mexico.

None of my children suffered from this. Believe me. I think that we are seeing a reflection of a growing awareness in society that there

is a breakdown in education. I think the point of this awareness is the growing incidence of defeat of school levies. The people who are in education don't seem to read this correctly. They seem to read it as a threat to children, on the surface, rationally. But really, unconsciously, I think that they see it as a threat to themselves. One of our problems in the United States is that we had a depression in the Thirties. That was a traumatic experience to a great many people who started looking for sinecures, for security. It was so strong during World War II when we began measuring the aptitudes of prospective draftees to see if we were going to defer them or draft them, that the education majors were found to be in the lower ten percent on all counts in our higher educational system. Those people went on to dominate a whole generation of teaching

HERBERT: Yeah, many of them.

Now, I'm not damning all educators with this. Please be careful how you interpret what I'm saying. But many of those people got into education and were not removable. Look at what particular class of educators dominates education today at the high school level.

What particular area is drawn on for most high school principals? Physical education. Most of the principals of high schools are jocks. While I enjoy sports and that sort of thing an much as anybody, you can't tell me that that is a good way to choose imaginative teachers who are aware of the needs of broad spectrum of education for the next generation. They are people who are going to hold to the rules. "Teach by the book! "

SCIN: Speaking of books, do you have any complaints about the way your books are marketed, advertised, or distributed?

HERBERT: I think that some better economic decisions could have been taken in certain instances. I think too few were printed in a couple of cases, and the market was hurt (in a purely marketing sense). In one instance. only 5,000 copies were printed in the first printing. This was sold out in a week. Somebody in New York should have been able read the handwriting on the wall and say, "Well, maybe we should have printed 25,000." The publishing industry also tends to get that bureaucratic fearfulness, where you're afraid to make independent decisions based on what you know about the market.

You make them on the basis of "the way we did it before." Then you're safe. You can say, "Well, we always printed that many for this kind of book."

SCIN: You still don't have enough books, but you have the answer for the man upstairs.

HERBERT: That's right. You haven"t made the profits that you might have for the company, but you have the right answer for the guy upstairs; and they're his rules. He should have passed the word down. Bureaucracy does not delegate authority.

SCIN: Who does the top man blame for all the mistakes?

HERBERT: Oh! He doesn’t make mistakes. The top man always makes sure that he is in a position so that he can prove he doesn’t make mistakes. This is one of the major reasons we stayed so long in Vietnam. It was because the people who were out there feeding information to Washington D.C. got their asses in an uproar when they discovered they'd made some bad mistakes in their reports.

They couldn't change those reports; the reports were down there in the filing cabinets in black und white. So they had to marshal new evidence to support previous positions which became more and more untenable. Now this is a highly successful procedure in the bureaucracy.

Let me tell you that one of the men who made some of the most egregious errors – the most terrifyingly, horrible errors – in lousy reporting of what was going on in Vietnam (and I can document every word of what I am saying), that one of those men, by the name of Philip Habib, is now the number two man in the state department.

SCIN: So Catch-22 is truth rather than fiction.

HERBERT: Catch-22 works!

SCIN: Thank you, Mr. Herbert.

This interview was taken at Frank Herbert's home in Port Townsend, Washington on July 15. 1976. Additional questions by Carl Bennett.

Twin Cities Reader, 1977

Giving Readers their Money's Worth, BY D.R. MARTIN, Twin Cities Reader, 22.04.1977

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The Sean MacKenzie Interview, 1977

by Peter Sean MacKenzie, 1977

*What follows is a verbatim transcript of a taped interview conducted by Peter Sean MacKenzie of Frank Herbert at Mr. Herbert's home. Ellipsis indicates end of sentence or "unintelligible". The 1977 interview of Herbert conducted by MacKenzie has remained unpublished (20 years) due to the rejection of the major periodicals of the time (*Rolling Stone*,* Playboy*,* Penthouse*,* New Yorker*,* Atlantic Monthly*). It was posted online in 1997.*

HERBERT (to photographer Don Anderson): I have a superb 43-86 zoom that would fit that camera. I picked it up in… I shot a roll with 12 lenses, selecting number and then processing and examining the negatives.

I haven't used it for about… where'd you get the adapter? Oh, yeah. That's the nice thing about that lens. You can virtually ignore bellows factors and use it.

HERBERT (to MacKenzie:) I was raised in Kitsap County (Washington). My dad was a whistle punk in the old logging days within 20 miles of here. What's a punk? They used to use donkey engines in the old steam engines and they'd have to keep it out of sight. Over a hill or down in the brush. The whistle punk stood

someplace where he could see the donkey engine and he had a whistle and he signaled when they were ready to pull the logs. In those days, they just put him in… he'd be in the third spot. Young kids usually did it. I think he was 14 or 15 years old. It was a summer job. Twenty-five cents a day (laughs).

I lived in the (San Francisco) Bay area for 15 years. I moved back up here seven years ago.

MACKENIZE: In the novel *Dune*, what is the Landsraad?

HERBERT: Well, Landsraad is an old Scandinavian word for an assembly of landowners. It's historically accurate in that it was an assembly and the first meetings of the legislative body – an early one, yes. The Landsraad – it's the landed gentry.

MACKENIZE: How do you pronounce “Atreides”?

HERBERT: What the difference how you say it? Pronunciation changes. Language is a very volatile subject. Spoken language, yes. Written language, not as much. But written language also changes. But the spoken language, my god. Accent, variations on pronunciation – a very volatile thing. So what's the difference how you pronounce it? The only thing I go by is I pronounce a man's name the way he pronounces it. I figure he should know. (laughs) Atreides is Atreus – the family Atreus out of Greek mythology.

(Editor's Note: From the American Heritage Dictionary: Atreus – a king of Mycenae [ancient city of Greece, located in the Peloponnesus, a peninsula forming the southern part of Greece], father of Agamemnon.)

(Pronunciation) …that's missing the point.

MACKENIZE: What is your conception of “now”?

HERBERT: I think the only way you can deal with a mixed-up time sense which our society has, and a mixed-up sense of how the universe works… – our society today is absolutes. They're an odd list of figures – … is to balance.

MACKENIZE: You're a surfboard driver. You're always hanging ten. That's the attitude you've got. The real question is how you deal with integrating a past with the now, so that you won't repeat the errors.

(MacKenzie cites the popular concept of linear time.)

HERBERT: Of course, you're thinking in linear sense. You're caught by linear time. (laughs) Time is a river… (laughs) Nonsense!

(Herbert regarding his living room bookcase, which contains every edition in every language of every book he's published:)

That is height of the publication collection. In other words, I have to have a copy of every book. You need it – I may get a query from somebody wanting a certain right to something I've written. I have the negatives right here.

Dune and some of the other books are in Japanese, Swedish, Italian, French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, I guess that covers it. It's not in Urdu yet. Urdu is an interesting language. Urdu is the language in the world where the first publication of softcover books have the largest first press run in the world. They think nothing, nothing at all, of running five million, 10 million copies on a first press run. The books would sell from 10 cents to 90 cents the last time I was there (India).

If you're buying a dictionary, let's say. We have a four-volume English-Urdu, Urdu-English dictionary. I think it cost 2.50 for the four volumes. Lousy printing quality.

(Herbert regarding present developments on Herbert's estate:)

We put together a development of evolution concept which looks like it was just moved here. And we're moving along with it.

The hang-up that our society has is that our society's full of people who are light-switch conditioned. Flip the switch and there it is. And the world doesn't work that way; the universe doesn't work that way. Our universe works on the basis of seasons and evolution – that is, you may start out to make up one thing, but conditions change, so you develop another.

But we're within our boundaries with the development. We just put a double-use house over the pool. The whole pool concept here is for multiple use. Where you see carpentry, they're solar collectors. There'll be solar collectors on both sides. I intend to use the pool water – 30,000 gallons – as heat storage to heat the greenhouse at night. We'll overheat the pool during the day – we generally swim in the mornings – we can draw 20 degrees from 30,000 gallons at night to heat the greenhouse, with a little radiator and small pumps. We'll even have an alternative of a small windmill to run the pumps.

I have a plan downstream within the next five years of putting a computer in that little side room in there and running this house off a computer. That is, with sensors at every heat outlet for the furnace. Controlling every vent from the computer, among other things. We're going to put a chimney up that corner of the sunroof with a big Fisher stove downstairs with a shroud over it, and we will put a duct down the furnace. We're going to put a rather strong fan down in the duct at the bottom because fans work better pulling than pushing it. And we're going to put another higher-pressure fan in the furnace system. It wasn't so new a furnace when we got it.

We've cut the use of oil fuel in this house by a third. What we're going to do is monitor not only the big Fisher stove – the wood-burning stove downstairs – but the furnace itself and all the vents with a computer. Computers are beautiful for idiot work, you know – just sit there and listen for trouble.

I know a lot of buildings where they do this. We'll cut our fuel consumption here by at last another 50 percent of what it's been. But our aim is to produce something that has a very high quality of life but a relatively low drain on the… energy system.

I'm not aiming just as you, Pete. I'm aiming at people who make crunch decisions. And I don't want to say something to you that I can't demonstrate. I'm not completely sure about all the things we're going to do. For example, we did a little experimenting with methane. Methane's all right for littler stuff, if you have a cheap way of compressing it. You see, you have multiple energy demands to balance. We drive a diesel automobile. It's an expensive investment, but it's actually the cheapest car I've ever owned. I could sell it right now for more than we paid for it.

It (Mercedes Benz) has the lowest record of maintenance costs in the world. It's the most economical to maintain of any car in the world. The diesel fuel takes approximately one third the energy to produce that gasoline does. You'd have to get around 90 miles to the gallon of gasoline to match me in the… fuel energy demands. The car will run 400,000 miles and we'll have to replace it at that time.

We're having trouble getting a manufacturer in the United States to pick up on our windmill device. A buddy of mine and I sat down two years ago and decided we were going to completely redesign the windmill. So we threw out everything we knew about windmills – “We don't know anything about windmills.” – and we asked ourselves, “What do we know about air movement?”

I'm a pilot and I moved right into aerodynamics immediately. He and I built an initial model that got torn down – for the parts, I needed the

bearings. We improved that and built another one. We made another model to test a new concept we had involved a way to build a port bottle. But in order to do that, we have a quantum leap in the use of wind for power. No doubt of it at all.

We have a mill that starts producing – well, depending on how you build it – it starts producing useable power at a five-knot wind. But, very important, we'd still be using it, at full draw, at a 50-knot wind. Other windmills feathered out or were torn apart, but ours was still producing power.

We're having a great deal of difficulty getting a manufacturer in this country to go for it, to the point where we're just about ready to go to Japan.

Japan is desperate for energy. We're about ready to go over there and say, “We can't get anybody in the United States to do this. Here it is.” I don't want to make a million bucks off it. I don't even necessarily want to get wealthy. I just want it produced because I know we need it.

I don't believe in fission power for the generation of electricity – not for the usual reasons. I would love to build a fission power plant for the generation of electricity. I know we have to find the energy somewhere. I say fission rather than fusion because I'm not sure about that either, but that's a different bag.

Breeder reactors are an act of desperation which are only going to cause us enormous trouble – ENORMOUS trouble. We are condemning our great-great-great-GREAT-grandchildren, many times down, to cursing us. If this society goes ahead with breeder reactors, our descendants will rewrite the history books to erase names. They will plow up our cemeteries to use the bones to make their china.

MACKENZIE: What’s wrong with breeder reactors?

HERBERT: They're targets. We're going into a period of enormous social unrest worldwide. Right now, one person, one kamikaze – I say we're going into the time of the kamikaze. As yet we don't have a means of preventing a kamikaze from hitting his target; we can't even prevent a kamikaze from hitting a president.

Right now, one man with a light airplane loaded with explosives could make the entire downriver of the Columbia (River, major waterway separating Washington state from Oregon) uninhabitable – from Hanford over here.

The thing that really gets me is not that we're going ahead with breeder reactors, but that we don't have anti-aircraft facilities and radar facilities around all of our existing atomic plants. We don't have such defense systems around. It is absolute stupidity.

MACKENIZE: When you say that you have guards and protection systems around these plants, there's an assumption in that, that historically has never been accurate. This is, that all your guards and your protective people – the operative word, ABSOLUTELY – are trustworthy. That they will never go psychotic or anything like that. You're saying all of these things – like, “We don't have that kind of protective system.”

HERBERT: Even then, who did the programming? Who did the

software? (laughs) What is your janitor like?

What we're doing is committing ourselves to building a system where we need absolute protection. And we have no absolute protection. The consequences of not having that absolute protection. The consequences of not having that absolute protection (Editor's Note: are worse) than if we just let it all go to hell and got by without the energy. Go back to burning wood, coal and all kinds of nasty things.

Weyerhaeuser (a huge wood-processing corporation headquartered in Washington State), for example, developed a marvelous, relatively low-cost system for converting an attic in a city house into a greenhouse, a thermopane greenhouse. A thermopane greenhouse in the attic of a house has some really nice plusses about it. One is, lots of times, even this time (of year) you have excess heat – a little fan will just draw it down into the rest of the house. Number two, you can grow your own winter vegetables and such. So you cut down on the trucking transportation coming in.

I'll tell you the other thing about why we're going to atomic fission. We're being lied to on the basis of the reason we're getting them (the nuclear plants). Great, big, Hitler-type, gigantic lies. The real reason is that you have a fixed market, people who won't use it. Under those circumstances, the higher the capitalization, the greater the profits. So the choice is being made for high capitalization ways of doing this.

Take an alternative example, this windmill that we developed – there's marvelous resource along the ridges watering the Columbia River. Because our mill has high-torque at zero revolutions, it beautifully lends itself to pumping water. We could take downstream water from the Columbia and pump it with wind power back up existing damns and use the existing hydroelectric system to a

greater maximum output with this simple windmill that we designed.

The thing can be built gigantic. We could build them as high as the World Trade Center in New York if we wanted to.

MACKENIZE: That big?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. A hundred-story high windmill would be nothing to our model. We could have it in operation in five years. So we could beat the demand (for electricity). I don't see anybody is going to go (for it), given the capitalization system that we have for production of energy. I don't know that anybody would want to use this.

A man in Minnesota who developed a way to cut the use of natural gas for home heating approximately 25 percent in all the houses using it, has been five years trying to get it on the market. It's a simple damper system. You see, regulatory agencies tend to be taken over by the industries they're going to regulate. So a very cheap, a very simple damper system that would reduce the natural gas consumption 20 to 25 percent nationwide (and it's easy to install; a home mechanic could put the damn thing in). He's been five years trying to get a license. Two major cities in the United States – Mobile (Alabama) and Detroit (Michigan) – tested it and found it a beautiful operating system. It works. It does what he said it would do.

There seems to be a tendency by special interests in the United States to suppress new, workable technologies.

This is why we'll probably have to go to Japan (with the windmill

design).

The thing the consumer public in the United States has failed to recognize is that the interlocking directorates of oil corporations, steel corporations and automobile manufacturers talk to each other. (laughs) What is good for General Motors is not necessarily good for the country. It might be, but not necessarily.

I wish General Motors would make a car that I could use. I have a Mercedes 300 diesel. We get 25 miles to the gallon in town and 30 on the road.

(Editor's Note: Miscellaneous data about Mercedes dealerships and prices, etc. omitted from transcript.)

The problem with propane and methane and the other natural gases is the energy used to compress them. Where methane really shines is in a stationary condition. Let's say you have an internal combustion engine to run an electric generator. Methane is an ideal fuel for that if you have it available. You can take the coolant from your engine, from the internal combustion engine, and pipe it through your methane generator. It just so happens that this coolant is at an optimum temperature for gas engines. It's at an optimum temperature for getting the most methane gas production out of your methane engine. So you have a symbiotic relationship between the engine and the methane production.

You're sitting in one place; you don't need to compress it – you can use relatively low compression factors for storage of the fuel (times ten pounds). It's ideal for cities, for example. It'd be a great way to go. Alcohol may be a better way, I don't know. It depends on the

group.

MACKENIZE: Let’s take a look at modern day jihads. What lies ahead?

HERBERT: We're going to have a lot of violence and upset. It's no simple, one thing. One of the things that's involved is the information explosion. Computers are going to have more influence on the society that involves this world for the next 35 years, very likely, than fire did. Computers are going to make an enormous difference.

I'll go WAY out on a limb. I think you're going to see biological linkage between human and computer. The computer is going to enter all phases of life, including what we generally feel is our individual freedom. The minute you can make a simulation model of a segment of society, then it's predictable that you're going to be able to refine that down to smaller and smaller bits. So you're going to be able to tell eventually what… you'll have uses. You see, this is not a totally bad thing. You'll be able to tell what the energy demand of the city of Seattle will be. You'll be able to tell the energy demand of the Mount Baker district. You'll be able to tell what the energy demand of Pete MacKenzie will be.

But you will also be able to tell what you talk, how you can talk Pete MacKenzie into buying “X”. What are his buttons, yes. Now, the other side of that coin is that, historically, whenever this has happened people have tended to grow calluses.

MACKENIZE: They’re having trouble on television right now selling

things on television commercials.

HERBERT: Good! (laughs) Yeah. (laughs) It's one of the untold stories. That television commercials are becoming less and less effective.

MACKENIZE: Why do you think that is?

HERBERT: Well, you get talked into buying something by the commercial. You try it, and it doesn't perform the way they said it would. About the fourth, fifth, sixth or seventh time that is, depending on your resistance factor… (laughs)

MACKENIZE: It finally dawns on you.

HERBERT: (laughs) Yes. TV isn't all bad, oh no.

MACKENIZE: But the commercials are.

HERBERT: Not necessarily. It doesn't follow that because some are bad, all are bad. It doesn't follow that because many products are bad, all are bad either.

(Beverly Herbert, Frank's wife, talks about toothpaste. MacKenzie says he uses Colgate, primarily because his mother once said her dentist said it's a superior product.)

HERBERT: Aha!

BEVERLY: Well, dentistry has changed. Many of the new dentists are advising not to use any dentifrice. Or, if you do use any, use a very soft dentifrice.

HERBERT: I was about to bring up the fluoride thing. Human begins are engaged in a long-term, massive experiment, as I call it. We don't know how long the effect of fluoride in these forms is on our systems. Obviously the middle-term use of fluorides doesn't seem to cause any trouble at all. In fact, it's helpful. It's cutting down the number of cavities. What will be in the long term? Is there a genetic effect? Will there be a residual peaking of some kind of physical problem because of this? We don't know yet.

By the time those questions are answered, it'll be too late.

Generally, they have been for centuries. I'm working in a book that I'll publish next year. It's called *The Dosadi Experiment*. It concerns a massive psychological experiment on a large population without their informed consent. The implications are all around us. You see, you can do this in science fiction because you're talking about

another world, another people. It's way over there. *(laughs)* The reality comes back later.

This is an extremely interesting area to develop. A lot of people think science fiction is over, we've done everything. They remind me of the 1890 congressman who wanted to close up the patent office because we've invented everything. He really did. This is a true story.

(Note: A friend of MacKenzie, knowing the interview was to take place, asked MacKenzie to pose the following question. The friend predicted Herbert's answer would be "water.")

MACKENIZE: What's your favorite beverage?

HERBERT: Favorite beverage? My god, it depends what I'm doing at the time. Sometimes I like beer, sometimes I like water, and sometimes I like wine. You know, the beverage you use depends on the condition you're in. Are you having a fine French dinner? You might want a 1961 Bordeaux.

MACKENIZE: Well, I'm not going to sip Gatorade with the President's wife.

HERBERT: Why not? It might be a hot day in Washington, D.C., and

you need to replace your electrolytes. So, it might be a beverage of choice, given a particular condition. All of these questions are really out of context because they depend on conditions.

MACKENIZE: Is there some way we can unshackle ourselves from the agreements we've made with the universe and function more as ourselves rather than as a recorder that just plays back?

HERBERT: Oh, I think we function. We're more than playback. We're more than playback because we have this other thing that's never been really defined – and I hope never is – called consciousness. We can see ourselves. We can even see ourselves as others see us sometimes.

We are products of this planet, in a sense, in a very real sense. We are conditioned by the planet. We live nine months in an amniotic ocean where our mother's chemistry is conditioned by the rhythms of the planet. We're animals who were conditioning to evolve on this planet.

MACKENIZE: We’re not just bodies.

HERBERT: I'm not saying that. That is not an assumption of what I'm saying. But I'm saying this is a factor, a very important factor, in what I'm talking about. The chemistry of our mothers has a very important early influence. And the earliest influences tend to be the most important… I don't think there's any doubt whatsoever about

this. We live to the variations in the amniotic chemistry in our mothers for nine months.

You can dig a clam off the ocean beach out here and move it to a saltwater aquarium in Chicago. For awhile, it continues to operate on the tidal rhythms of its origin. Then it gets onto the tidal rhythms of Chicago. It'll come up where there's a high tide in Chicago. So it's measuring the movement of the moon and sun right now. A clam can sense it. We are, as I said one time, bivalves on the tide edge of the universe. We are.

We didn't come by the word lunacy by accident. In major cities, the full moon is when the police and fire departments are most alert, for lunacy. I did a small survey in San Francisco of bartenders. The bartenders to a man – and I got no deviation from this – had customers they only saw during the full moon. They're full moon people.

We vibrate to the rhythms of our planet, is what I'm saying. It'd be unusual if we didn't.

MACKENIZE: What were the contributions that your family made to *Dune*?

HERBERT: Bev kept the world off my neck when I was immersed in the book. She helped me find some resource materials. She keeps me well fed. People call in the morning when I'm writing. She tells them I can't come to the phone now.

I have a very good friend in California, for example, Don…, a former critic and book editor of the San Francisco Examiner, who used to

alert me any time a book came along when I was doing research – here was something I might be interested in.

MACKENIZE: How much research did you do?

HERBERT: I did a year at the Library of Congress. I did about six years on the whole book (*Dune*). I leaned on Muslim and Arab history very heavily. I did an extensive study of Arab history. I also used the Library of the British Museum. I've lived in the desert. I was doing other things during those six years. Don't get the idea that was all I did. But I did the research over a six-year period (from 1959 to 1965).

MACKENIZE: How do you maintain that goal out there, with deadlines being in terms of years instead of hours?

HERBERT: Well, you really are loading the system. You're loading the consciousness and memory and so on. These labels are only approximate.

MACKENIZE: Your coffee is great. I wish I had the recipe.

Anybody can have it. Just go to Joseph Kittay at the Good Coffee Co. (in Seattle) and say, “I want a pound of that.” (Literally, “Frank

Herbert's blend.") We have to buy about 50 pounds at a time, but it keeps well frozen. We have several friends around here who buy it. In fact, the next time we go over (to Seattle) we're going to take their orders.

This is the cheapest way to buy coffee nowadays. It's not exactly wholesale. But you buy it in large lots and you get a 10 to 15 percent discount. Plus, a pound of this coffee – you use approximately one-third less than an equivalent amount of another coffee. So take that amount off the cost. An amount of coffee would cost you 3, let's say. So it's really the cheapest way to buy coffee.

If you want the stuff, just tell Joe you want my blend. I worked a couple years developing it. It tastes the way coffee smells. I did a couple years of research in winemaking, the wine industry. In California, I got involved with making wine, studying it and discussing it until I developed a wine palate.

Julius (a friend) said something to me one time that really hit me. He said, "In western culture, most of western culture, it is considered effete, and somehow simple, to train the palate." To educate the palate. (laughs) And that's right, it is. We don't do it. It's economically dangerous, too. Because if you have an educated palate, you demand things from the food industry which the food industry is not willing to give. (laughs)

What we did on the basis of that… (study) was we bought 20 1/8th pounds of coffee in San Francisco. And a little stainless steel drip thing that made one cup of coffee and we had tasting parties. We sat down and made a cup of coffee. And we each had mocha and then we would taste it and try to describe it. Was it chocolate-like in the sense of heavy body and richness that you'd expect from chocolate? Was it thin and acid? What was it? You reduced it to word. So that you could refer to it later. Then we started blending

and working on that. A little acidy, a little dark roast, a little Viennese roast, changing the roast proportions. We finally came up with just a GLORIOUS blend that you had to make one cup at a time because it wouldn't keep. (laughs) It just goes to hell in a hurry. But then we got off of that and blended from that with a high proportion of the rather acid light roast or medium roast. The medium roast mountain coffee which is about 60 percent of this blend. Then we added heavier increments of some of the darker roasts. There are very small amounts of French roast, for example. It's for the bitterness, you see, which is kind of an… for the taste buds.

(MacKenzie has to excuse himself and asks Herbert where his "facilities" are.)

HERBERT: Over there. We call it "the euphemism."

MACKENIZE: Who is directing *Dune*?

(Note: In references to a planned movie based on the book; this is VERY pre David Lynch.)

HERBERT: Alejandro Jodorowski. He's a Polish-Mexican. (laughs) He's a great guy. I have seen the script and it's a damn good script. I'll believe it when I see it.

MACKENIZE: Do you think it's going to measure up?

HERBERT: How do you know? How can you say at this point? I don't even know if they're going to complete it. In movie making, you believe the movie when it comes to your local house. Then you made a judgement. Judgements are very personal, too. So beforehand, what can you say? Well, once they start the major production – that is, when they get the actors on stage – then they have to bring me in as Technical Advisor. The last I heard it was being filmed in Algeria, but I don't know for sure.

MACKENIZE: I'm going to bring the entire Chinatown dancing dragon team to be the worm! (laughs)

HERBERT: By Shai-hulud, I think you've got it! I don't know how they're going to do it. I don't really think they've decided yet. De Laurentis damn near bought it, you know. In fact there was a scramble right after we got back from France this summer.

MACKENIZE: Then Jodorowsky must be a heavyweight.

HERBERT: Yeah. He's made a couple of movies that have made artistic splashes: *El Top*, *Magic Month*. He's also pretty much in

demand in the United States today.

MACKENIZE: Is the *Dune* trilogy complete?

HERBERT: I thought it was. But now there's a lot of pressure for me to come back to it. I'm not reluctant to do it, but I wouldn't do it JUST because people want me to do it. I've got to want to and I've got to have a concept that lends itself to a really good story.

The thing that attracts me is, say, coming back to the character of Leto 3,500 years later.

(Regarding Leto's apparent immortality:) Not completely, but very long-lived.

I have this theory that heroes are bad for society, human society. And that superheroes are super bad. Some of the stuff that Kennedy did, for example, is just coming out. The problem with heroes and superheroes is that we don't question their decisions.

MACKENIZE: *(Speaking of heroes:)* How do you handle people's reactions to your success?

The role patterns are very fixed in our society. I taught at the

University of Washington for awhile. And the first to two classes I had to shatter all of those illusions. Say “shit” four or five times, you know? And sometimes even worse. You really have to do things that break up the patterns.

I worked for awhile last week to try and get a woman to run for president of the Science Fiction Writers of America. Not because I'm a great women's libber or anything else, but because I think the conditioned differences between men and women in our society are so great that we tend to create, by the time people are 20 years old, two different species. Not that they really are two different species, but the difference in conditioning is such that there are ways of looking at our universe that are very different, given the difference of the sexes.

So I was being very selfish. I wanted that other look at the organization. But I couldn't get any takers.

(Photographer Don Anderson brings up the subject of drugs as a recurring theme in Herbert's work.)

We as a society, as a species, tend to have a very unwholesome relationship, a very deadly relationship, with drugs. There is only one drug in our society where, if you really get an addict and you cold turkey that addict, you are condemning the addict to death. He'll die every time – and that's alcohol. Not heroin, but alcohol.

Heroin very seldom kills an addict on cold turkey. It's a rough go, but he doesn't die of it. But a real alcoholic will die every time.

Also, there are some misinformations in our society about drugs. It's

recently been discovered, something that if you just thought about it for awhile – that I did a long time ago and I've been writing about it for a long time, pecking away at it – you'd see that of course this is true.

If you cannot stop all of the drugs from getting into the country and you capture party of them, you merely raise the price of what remains on the street. And that's our real problem in this country. It is not that people are using drugs, but that they are ripping off society to support their habit and the profits are going to organized crime.

The major source of addicts in our society – three-fourths of the new addictions – are literally created by existing addicts turning on other people to get a market to support their own habits. There's an easy way to cut down three-fourths of the new addictions in this country, and that's take the profit out of it. You don't eliminate the problem, you just reduce its dimensions.

It's a medical problem. It's a medical, sociological, psychological problem. It's not a criminal problem.

MACKENIZE: How would you feel about, as a solution, distributing junk to junkies for free?

HERBERT: Free, or for 50 cents at the local drugstore, yeah. I would think that would be a major way to cut the dimensions of the problem. But, of course, you have transactional relationships between that portion of the bureaucracy which justifies its existence by there being bad people who use it, you see, and they who protect us from the bad people. They're not protecting us. They're making

the problem worse.

So you have the… (drug law enforcement agencies) in a sense, unconsciously in league and sometimes overtly in league with organized crime. And the profits are enormous. You know what happened to the heroin they confiscated in the “French connection?” It disappeared from the police property room in New York City.

The profits are so enormous they can buy the sister of a reigning monarch. They can buy diplomats and their unexaminable pouches. The Korean embassy has been deeply into this trade all over the world. They can buy police forces in the major cities in the United States. They can buy border guards along a whole string of the border.

I mean, you offer five men two million dollars to bring in a load that will make you 50 million. That's a small piece off the top.

And we should have learned the lesson with Prohibition. One of the things we did with Prohibition was we put enough capital in the hands of organized crime that when we eliminated Prohibition, they could turn to something else, which was the hard drugs. Unless you can stop all of it, unless you can absolutely lock up the… (pushers), and get all of it off the street, our methods, if they weren't so terrible in their results, they would be humorous. They're ludicrous.

And the public's been lied and lied and lied to about the effects of the system. What we have is an open-ended system on the price an addict will pay for his fix. That means we'll never discover the top limit of what he'll pay. They'll pay your life, your mother's life, all your possessions – anything that they can get their hands on.

You see, the hard drugs are not the problem. It is the crime to support the hard drugs business that's the problem. So the enormous lies that have been told to this society by an entrenched

bureaucracy which is maintaining its own self-justification by increasing lies.

MACKENIZE: What is that bureaucracy?

It's the drug enforcement agencies. They see themselves as a quasi-military police force which is protecting us from the terrible demon at our borders. And they know damn well they can't keep it all out. Every time they take some off the streets and catch it at the border, all they do is raise the price. They put increasing pressure on the addicts to commit greater crimes, to get more money to support their habits.

There are some weird things going on in our society and this is one of the weirdest, because we went through this with alcohol in Prohibition. But this hard drug business is really outrageous. We are creating new addicts. Seventy-five percent of the new addicts are being created by the system. And changing that system, taking the profit out of it, wouldn't eliminate the problem. It would merely reduce it to more manageable proportions, where we could begin to handle it as a medical and psychological problem.

We can't handle the problem AT ALL given its present dimensions. The unholy alliance between that part of the bureaucracy which is supposed to be protecting us from this and organized crime is THERE.

MACKENIZE: What are your plans?

HERBERT: I'll do some kind of another book. I have a couple of ideas. I'm working on this place so that we'll eventually have a seminar centers. We're trying to be as constructive as possible.

I would like to leave a legacy: a world that's slightly better than the one I found.

MACKENIZE: Don wanted to take some pictures. Why don't we take a little walk?

Source: http://members.lycos.co.uk/Fenrir/ctdinterviews.htm

Vector 88 Magazine, 1978

an interview by David Wingrove

DW: You've been a science fiction writer since the fifties. Has it always been your job?

FH: Well, I've been a journalist, I would write my own stuff in the mornings and work the newspapers in the afternoons.

DW: And you're still doing this?

FH: No, no. I haven't been for about ten years now,

DW: When did you actually get into science fiction writing?

FH: In the early fifties.

DW: Was it through just reading it?

FH: Partly. I'd been writing other things – adventure, suspense, pulp stuff. But science fiction struck me as a field which was wide open. Big elbow room. The imagination could just take off and play any game it wanted – as long as it was fanatical (laughs).

DW: I notice you seem to have a fascination with the legalities of people's behaviour. This is particularly evident in the Gowachin courtarena.

FH: *The Dosadi Experiment*? You know, you can use science fiction – if you're entertaining – as a place to play analogue games. You can talk about racism, you can talk about over-legalisms, bureaucracy, super-crowding. You can say whatever: one of these assumptions that we don't question.

DW: How did the original idea of Beausab come about? Was *that* a natural development of this thought?

FH: Well, I just figured that there was no natural predator for bureaucracy and that this was an unnatural situation, because there are natural predators for almost everything else.

DW: A sort of formalised anarchy?

FH: In a way, yes. A kind of ombudsman with clout (laughs).

DW: Another very noticeable thing is that you take a lot of care in developing different species. I'm thinking of things like the Pan Spechi and even, in a way, your future-Human societies.

FH: I think the whole question of aliens is glossed over in our society, and a lot of it is glossed over in science fiction: and I'm trying very hard *not* to do that. I know I'm not always successful but I work hard at it. Carl Jung said one time that before we could understand what it was to be human we would have to really meet

an alien intelligence.

DW: Which would define our humanity?

FH: An alien intelligence, *per se*, has to have characteristics that don't jive with what *we* believe is intelligence.

DW: Can we truly, then, understand what is alien? Because alien is something we can't experience.

FH: I think you can understand 'alien' the way the theologians have finally decided they will understand God. By negatives.

DW: Everything that surrounds the gap in the middle.

FH: Yes (laughs).

DW: I read *Dune* three or four years ago, and it's still very fresh with me; and the thing that struck me about that was that everything was so meticulous. You couldn't quibble about it – you couldn't say "*that's* out of place, *that* seems wrong". It seemed as if you had spent years and years just getting the details right.

FH: Six years. And a year and a half of writing on each book. In fact,

the three books are one book in my head.

DW: Is there ever plans to branch out from that, or is that it for *Dune* ?

FH: I may come back to it, but I don't talk about work in progress. You use the same energies to talk about work that you use to write it, and I'm very jealous of those energies.

DW: You don't wish to waste the time that could be used creating?

FH: That s right.

DW: How did you react to *Star Wars*? It's a question I've been dying to ask you, because I saw the film and thought there were bits of *Dune* throughout that.

FH: Well, either deliberately-borrowed-by-accident or not, they raided a great many science fiction stories, I think. But it s hard to say how they did it or whether they were really being derivative, or whether the science fiction itself has become an acceptable part of our mythology.

DW: Do you think he was trying to create something from all the parts?

FH: Well, I saw pieces of Ted Sturgeon's work, Larry Niven's, Barry

Malzberg's. I saw things that were *recognisably* out of their stories, find my own feeling about it – and strangely enough I've had confirmation from other science fiction writers, not all of them, but many of them have agreed with me on this – is that Star Wars bored the hell out of us because it was cliched to us.

DWs Who's been writing it?

FH; Yes.

DW: I think that a lot of people found that the actual plot itself and the dialogue was very much a cliché throughout. But some of the ideas – presented visually – at last there was a movie that…

FH: …In the long run I think *Star Wars* will have acquainted a larger audience with things that are passé with science fiction but which are groundwork for the ongoing creation of science fiction.

DW: So you think the science fiction movie takes off from here?

FH: Oh, indeed. Yes, indeed. We've just been building a wider audience, that's all. When you write a novel – a mainstream novel – there are certain conventions that your readers accept. An adventure or suspense film, now, has certain conventions that people accept. They know how these things work and in the U.S. we have been very heavily conditioned by the jump-cuts of the advertising which get a great deal of information in about 30 seconds. All of these things are part of the accepted conventions of the medium. Now, science fiction had not *spread* its conventions over quite that wide an audience,

DW: It hadn't the command of the media, really, to do that?

FH: But now it has the biting clout, because it makes money. So, I only hope that it doesn't become the darling of the academics so that the life is…

DW: Choked out of it…

FH; *Analysed* out of it. People should read it because they enjoy it, and go to the film because they enjoy it.

DW: Going on to a very specific point, again on films. They were making a film of *Dune*. How far did that get?

FH: I've no idea. I'm supposed to be called in as technical adviser whenever they begin principle photography. There has been no information coming my way, no signals that they are beginning principle photography. In fact, the last word I had was that they had put it in the back-burner and probably turned the burner on, So, I don't know what's going on.

DW: And how long has that situation been in existence?

FH: Well, this has been going on more than six years now, There was a hiatus caused by the death of the person who originally purchased the film rights.

DW: You find this a little wearying at times?

FH: Well, I'm going on to other things. I've other things to do,

DU; Talking of new things, then. The Dosadi Experiment. It's already, to you, an old thing. Because – the whole idea, from Whipping Star and going back to stories like *The Tactful Saboteur* – how many of these threads are you actually putting together? Are you visualising a compact universe,

resulting from your stories?

FH: No, quite the contrary. Not a *compact* universe – a quite *diverse* universe – one with complexities piled on complexities. One which absolutely *demands* of its participants that they adjust to each other or fall by the wayside.

DW: No matter how the adjusting is done?

FH: That's right. That the stringencies of the interface between different civilisations, different alien cultures, demand new ways of adjusting. And, of course, I'm doing other things, I'm poking a little fun at over legalising and, alternatively, over-beaurocracising our civilisation. I'm a devotee of C. Northcote Parkinson. Very much so

(laughs), A genius of a man. The marvelous thing – that day on that beach in Malaysia – when he suddenly saw *through* to the truth of bureaucracy; that they don't perform a service, ultimately – that they become a parasite.

DW: Yes, it's very much an organism, isn't it?

FH: Yes. it is. It's an organism which *drains* civilisation. It could be argued, and with *a* great deal of merit, that the Roman civilisation died of bureaucracy – as much as anything else.

DW: Of having too-neat offices…

FH: It's a kind of disease.

DW: Working in an office you see the forms it takes.

FH: Oh yes…

DW: It seems that the people with the work piled on their desks are the people who are *working* and the people with the empty desks are the ones whose jobs have gone sterile. Though that s not always the case…

FH: No. In fact, a clean desk often means that the person is getting things done efficiently, which, in a bureaucracy, is a very dangerous way to live…

DW: Because they'll start looking for people to manipulate, to occupy their time?

FH: Yes. Bureaucracy eventually becomes a make-work process. I don't know what it s like in Britain, but in the US one person is actually producing something, that is, something marketable – is adding to the Gross National Product – to support two people who are, in some instances, supplying needed services and, in some instances, dragging their heels, you might say.

DW: That's very much the case in Britain. The services section of the population grows and grows year by year,

FH: But the services get poorer and poorer.

DW: I think, as the classic example, the British Navy is always quoted – where it started off with so many sailors and a few administrators and now is mainly Administration with a few sailors and a couple of boats.

FH: Yes (laughs).

DW: Again, on specifics, as far as *Dosadi* is concerned. I noticed *Dosadi* itself was a world where food was precious as much as in *Dune* where water was precious.

FH: There are lots of things that are money, that we don't recognise as money. Wheat is money.

DW: How much of this comes from personal experience, from journalism, from *seeing* these things?

FH: A journalist, if he is alert and stays in the business long enough, becomes somewhat of a generalist. If you have an active curiosity and feed your curiosity. And I would say that just about half of the ideas that I play with – probably, I'm guessing – come from a journalistic background. Interviewing and story-searching that takes you down strange avenues, you see.

DW: What form of journalism did you mainly partake in?

FH: Oh, I was a yellow journalist. I loved to turn over rocks and look at things scurry, because our society tends not to examine its sacrosanct assumptions and – for very good reasons, I think –wants

to believe that people are what they say they are and that conditions are what they are presented as being. But it doesn't take a child or a genius to see that sometimes the king is naked.

DW: That is very much the classic role of the journalist, which is very often forgotten.

FH: And I think it is a very *necessary* role in the society in the United States. I don't know what it s like in Britain, but it is a safety valve, really. Here, in Britain, you have the monarchy to protect you from *revolutionary* change – which I think is a very good service. In the United States we have the fourth estate (laughs).

DW: How did you react to Watergate, then, being very much involved in journalism?

FH: Oh, I think that Richard Nixon was created as much by the people who opposed him as by the people who supported him; people need their scapegoats and Richard Nixon never was successful in concealing what he was. We get the kinds of government we deserve, you know? In any republic or democracy this is true. Very true.
No, I look on Nixon as a very sad figure. He was a product of the culture which projected him, you see. I don't think there was any day in history when Richard Nixon woke up, twirled his mustache and said "Ah-hah, *today* I'm going to do an evil thing." (laughs) No, he did what he thought was right because that's the way he'd learned to

perform in a society which presented these things as right.

DW: Do you think there's such a thing as genuine evil, then?

FH: Oh, I think there's a bit of it around. But I don't think that Nixon was genuinely evil. I think that he behaved in the office more-or-less the way Kennedy behaved and Johnson behaved – and perhaps with a bit more moral rectitude than some of his predecessors. *But*, he had a fatal flaw. He was an unsympathetic character.

DW: He didn't have the sort of *persona* that Carter has?

FH: No, he had no *charisma*. And that's always fatal. It's essentially a Greek tragedy, you see. He didn't stand there beating his chest like Prometheus and say "But I just did what *Kennedy* did, you know, and Johnson, and Eisenhower…" And everybody says "Yes, but we don't *like* you…" (laughs).

DW: It surprises ms, then, in that case, that they're actually selling Richard Nixon t-shirts in America.

FH: But why should that surprise you? He's a kind of pathetic figure. People are probably feeling shamefaced. They say "Well, our civilisation created him. Why did we make *him* the only one to wear

the hair shirt? (laughs).

DW: Perhaps it's surprising to us because the British in character are very much less excessive. In fact, they're secretive in their own way and reticent.

FH: Oh, but you have your scandals.

DW: Oh, we have our scandals but they're quickly shovelled…

FH: …shovelled under the carpet. Yes, of course, We tend to bring them out and analyse them and say "well, what did he *really* mean by that?" and "how did I participate in that?" and "perhaps I should discuss this with my psychiatrist?"

DW: Has that ever been a major factor in your stories? I know a lot of American science fiction writers do this. Fred Pohl's Gateway has every alternate chapter with a robot psychiatrist. Is it ever something you've particularly concentrated on in any of your stories, any of your work?

FH: I'm well aware of the currents of psycho-analysis in our culture, I was a student of Jung's – not directly, but second hand; one of my mentors was a student of Jung's – and my feeling is that the

unexamined assumptions are available to us through our actions – either individually or as a society. What the society does as a whole – if you ignore what it's saying it's doing. Don't look at the rationalisations and protestations, look at what's happening, look at what the 'thing' is doing.

DW: The actual *thing-in-itself*…

FH: Yes, look at the thing. Right. This is like throwing a searchlight on history.

DW: Do you believe in the historical process?

FH: Oh, indeed I do. I think that its complexities are not all that easy yo unravel, but they're there. Oftentimes what you see is only the current at the top, boiling on the surface.

DW: It's very much something that I get personally out of your writing.

FH: I like to get underneath and look at it…

DW: You're showing the surface there for the first, say, hundred pages of a book, and then you're slowly burrowing deeper and

deeper till you get to the end.

FH: Yes, that's right. That's a deliberate action on my part.

DW: That’s conscious? Yes,.

FH: …I like to take things that everybody says "Well, you know that’s true because it’s true.“ All assumptions that we have, when we ultimately come down to the point where we believe it because we believe it,

DW: And not because it’s actually true?

FH: Yes.

DW: You say that Jung was one of your mentors – if at second hand. From that, what books do you like reading?

FH: Oh, I read non-fiction mostly. I'll read fiction occasionally, chewinggum for the mind on an airplane, that sort of thing – or under similar circumstances. But most of the fiction I read is on the recommendation of people whose taste I trust.

DW: Are there any particular writers – and I'm not particularly thinking of science fiction writers – who you admire, I thought you might like Hesse, being a student of Jung's,

FH; Oh, yes. And James. I'm a fan of the Irish poets – Yeats, Guy de Maupassant, Po, O. Henry. The incisive exposition of character. And I read a great deal of poetry, because poetry is *compressed* meaning, A great deal of effort goes into putting an enormous amount of stuff in a very small space.

DW: It's been said that the nearest thing to science fiction writing is poetry because you have that density of image. It's not always true – in fact, in many cases, it's *not* – but when it's written well, it's written densely. The ideas are all there.

FH: I have been known to write portions of my work as poetry and then mine the poetry and restore it to prose,

DW: Is that one of many techniques you use to write?

FH: One of many.

DW: Do you ever find you come across a writer's block?

FH: Thus far I've never had one.

DW: Is this because you approach it in so many various ways?

FH: Also, I approach it *professionally*. What do I *do*? I *write*! I sit down at the typewriter, put paper in it and work.

DW: And you revise a lot?

FH: Oh yes, I think a good story has to start growing in the middle, Then it starts enriching outward in both ends, that s when you know it’s going well.

DW: So you've never got an opening scene in mind?

FH: Oh, oftentimes. That doesn't mean that the enrichment of character or the drama, the suspense, doesn't take place *after* you begin with that scene, I've been known to write the last chapter of a book before I've completed it.

DW: And work towards that?

FH: Oh yes.

DW: I had the impression that it *was* revised because it's constructed so well that by the end *all* is practically revealed, the things that were unclear at the start are certainly clear by the end. And it has a very hard skeleton, if you like.

FH: A lot of work has gone into the plumbing. I plot heavily.

DW: You do?

FH: I like to know my characters *very* well. I'll make file folders on the characters. I may have a character who walks on stage at the age of 25 – but I know where that character was born, parentage, schooling, friends, trauma, enjoyments, likes and dislikes. I know that person as though he were my brother. Perhaps better (laughs).

DW: Because you can get under the surface, yes. Obviously, as a journalist you are observing people, but are you looking for particular things in people when you're studying them – or observing them?

FH: The nuances which make character are products of so many things that what you look for are signals that separate people. Why does this person behave this way and that one another way? Why are these two people on a collision course? It's a psycho-analytic job in a sense except that you control the psyche to a degree.

DW: You can fashion it. You've admitted you're a Jungiar, How do the theories of Freud affect you?

FH: Oh, I think Freud has his fixations. Well, so did Jung. And I think these come out in what he believed. I would say that his rejection of Adler, for example, was ill-timed and a mistake on his part.

DW: In what way?

FH: Power seeking power is a very strong motive in our society, Most of the politicians that I know are driven by this. It's a flaw in all political systems – that the people who usually get into power want power for power's sake,

DW: As a thing in itself?

FH: Yes. And this is the essential flaw of totalitarian governments.

DW: Their ultimate downfall?

FH: Yes, and the saving grace of a democracy or a republic is that occasion ally we can throw the bastards out. And get a new set of bastards (laughs)

DW: Do you think much changes about human nature?

FH: Oh, I think that the words 'Human nature' is a sort of catchall that doesn't mean too much anymore. The sophistication of the people who observe their own participation in history and the way others perform is increasing. And that certainly must have its influence on whatever we believe is 'human nature'.

DW: So it's really the recording process that is becoming more sophisticated, not Man himself?

FH: Oh, yes. And computers are going to make a quantitative difference in this because they are storage and retrieval systems above all else.

DW: I notice that there's not a great deal of scope for robots in your stories. In Phil Dick's stories, for example, the simulacrum is *a* standard thing of the future.

FH: I believe we've tried slavery and have found that it is more dangerous to the slave owner than it is to the slave.

DW: And you think that lesson is deep-rooted?

FH: I think it's very deep-rooted, yes. I think there is a hardcore of very sane distrust in most of civilisation towards the free lunch.

DW: Do you think this is a modern thing since Roman Times, if you like?

FH: I'd say since the Middle Ages, but perhaps it's 12th to 14th century. Since that time. When you see factory workers revolting against the automated factory, I think you're sensing this – not that this is going to stop the automated factory, because most factory workers, caught in the clutches of union hyperbole, are going down a primrose path, I believe , that is not going to pay them in the end. They are reducing the quality of what they produce. And this is where the automated factory can beat them. You see what I'm saying? If they let it beat them.

DW: I don't know how it is in America, but in Britain you have this trend now – and it's a small trend, I admit – to go back to hand-made goods.

FH: It's getting very strong in the U.S.. As almost a reaction to this.

DW: Of course.

FH: A reaction to the machine age.

DW: To the machine that makes a very nice product that will last quickly…

FH: Not longer but… (both laugh)

FH: …and instead you can make one by hand that your great-grandchildren will be passing on to their descendants. We support that sort of thing, personally, my wife and I. We have had our furniture hand-made, for example, by cabinet makers.

DW: You don't like utility living?

FH: I don't feel that I really *own* anything. I'm a *steward* of certain things and my stewardship certainly will be judged in the centuries to come not only on the basis of some artistic interpretations of what we've done, but also of how the things endure.

DW: Are you conscious of *endurance* , as far as being a writer is concerned?

FH: Yes. Also of the *extent* of time. Take, for example, a science fiction writer who writes a story about 25,000 years in the future. In a very real sense, while you're writing that story, you live out there. Then you come back to this time. Well, these are primitive times.

DW: And you react differently? Do you find that?

FH: 2,500 years ago, if you look back – that was primitive times, wasn't it? All present time is primitive in terms of this kind of time development,

DW: Do you get a personal sense of that in your own writing?

FH: Oh yes, very much so.

DW: When you look out of the window and see petrol-driven cars.

FH; Oh, indeed. Quite primitive. At least, the conditions around me are quite primitive.

DW: It's an amusing concept.

FH: And not only amusing. I think it's quite accurate. If you could be transported back, let's say, five thousand years, what would you find around you? See, you've lived here now – how old are you?

DW: Twenty-three.

FH: Right, You've lived here for twenty-three years. You go back five thousand years. What would you find around you?

DW: It’s very hard to visualise…

FH: Primitive timesl Very much so. You Wouldn't have any indoor plumbing. No medical facilities as you understand them. Your food would be catch-as-catch-can, probably,

DW: In fact, I don't know whether you've heard pf it, but they had an experiment down in Devon…

FH: Oh, I know about this. The primitive-living experiment?

DW: That's it. The Bronze Age one. And they've all fled back to their comforts after a while.

FH: Of course. I know of such an experiment in the United States where the people cheated. They took canned goods (both laugh).

DW: Perhaps that's something we haven't discovered about the Bronze Age yet.

FH: I don't think bronze cans would work very well…

DW: How in fact do you see the future in personal terms, not just in fictional terms – or perhaps it's the same thing for you? Is what is in your books the way you visualise the future?

FH: I keep looking for surprises. And I know I'll find them.

DW: You haven't actually sat down to set out the model in your head of what's going to happen?

FH: Oh no, because think that's another dead end. There is no such thing as *the future*. That's a protestant delusion because it says that predestination is *it*, you see. It's *the* future and all we're doing is waiting for it to happen.

DW: You're very much an advocate of free-will then?

FH: Well, in a sense, yes. But more, I would say, an advocate of the accidents of the universe. I really do believe that we live in an Einsteinian and Heisenbergian universe, where relativity is the name of the game. Not fixed courses. We are *not* on a railroad track.

DW: And do you think the rules will over change?

FH: Oh, indeed, I think rules will change. You see, this is asking for absolutes when you say 'rules'.

DW: Hmm.. It’s very much against what the universe is about.

FH: Yes, of course.

DW: A thought, here, in fact, which was spawned by something I read in The Dosadi Experiment, about getting down to what things actually *are* and people defining things. When they actually define ’that's how an atom moves', 'that's the pattern of something', do you ask the question *then* 'why does it do that?’.

FH: Of course. You must. I think that absolutes always occur in very isolated circumstances. The single rule to explain everything means you’re very localised. You haven’t moved out into a broader universe. And the same thing is true of what we usually call ’scientific progress'. When we discover something – the way an atom moves or the way the DNA molecule spirals round – what we've done essentially is open up a new door on things we *don’t* know.

DW: And people crowd into the room and explore it?

FH: Yes.

DW: Do you think that will be the continuing pattern of scientific development?

FH: I don't see how it can help but be. That's the way the universe plays its games.

DW: Every sixty years people will channel their thoughts into certain dead ends and then someone will break out into another room?

FH: Well, I don’t know that I'd put a sixty year beat on it, because I think the beat is different. But the universe continually surprises us, in the sense that things are not what we thought they were a generation ago.

DW: Have you ever thought of writing a novel on that idea?

FH: I use this – I think it’s an insight – regularly, but I haven’t thought of doing *just* that because I think that again is an idea that you would have to people with interesting people and flesh out in dramatic ways, and that changes the character of it, you see.

DW: But the idea is In the back of your head?

FH: Well, ideas are a dime a dozen. Ideas don't make stories. *People* make stories.

DW: Do you find, then, that you – you've said already that you have files on characters – sit down and look at several files and say 'these are the people I've got'?

FH: When I said that I meant that I will have the concept of a story, the broad concept, the structure, and then I people it.

DW: But you never find you have odd characters?

FH: Left over? Oh, no.

DW: You never get a character developing in mind without a story to go with it?

FH: No. Because I build the characters for the story and the story for the characters. It's an interacting situation.

DW: Going back to what we were saying earlier. How do you react

to Toffler?

The voice crying in the wilderness. *Future Shock*, that is, I'm sure, what you're meaning. Well, Toffler, I think, has put his finger on a human characteristic which, at its core, we usually call 'conservatism'. Now, 'conservatism' is bred in the bone – and I think for very good survival reasons. It didn't do to go out and pick any fruit you saw in the forest and eat it because the damp thing might be poisonous. But somehow we learned that was poisonous, that not, this cures gastritis and this gives you visions of God (laughs),

DW: Or visions of what God isn't…

FH: Or makes you drunk. We've done that with a sort of toe-in-the-water conservatism all through human history.

DW: And hence you get these sharp reactions against it.

FH: Yes.

DW: Like the youth movements of the sixties.

FH: That, I think, is the essence of what Toffler is talking about when he talks about 'future shock'.

DW: So, what he is talking about, basically, is something that's always been there?

FH: Yes, that's right. There's always has been 'future shock'. Yet it moves. (laughs)

DW: Jumping a bit. You say you like poetry, you like reading – not particularly fiction books – do you get involved very much in other art forms? Music?

FH: Yes.

DW: Do you paint?

FH: No, no. I was a professional photographer and still know quite a bit about it, although I'm probably ten years out of date with some of the developments, because I haven't kept it up. I'm interested in Visual Arts – other people's painting and so on. I like nothing better than to get in a good coffee house with a good poetry reading.

DW: Have you found any while you've been over in London?

FH: Not yet, I haven't, no. But I haven't really had too much spare time. It's usually work all day on the script.

DW: Do you take lengthy holidays at times?

FH: Oh, I've been known to take a month off or so…

FH: Fishing. Sailing, I love to race a sailboat, A great sport, I also like to fly an airplane – that sort of thing. And I think one of the things I'm going to pick up on in the next few years is sail-planing. I've already had some instruction in it. I'll get my ticket and do it. I feel every ten years you should pick up something new.

DW: And get deeply involved in it?

FH: It's what you should do. Kind of renew your ability to adjust to the marvelous things that are around us in this civilisation.

DW: Have many things over the last… ten years or so genuinely surprised you in that way? Anything that's come along, out of the blue?

FH: No, I'm afraid not. But I keep hoping.

DW: Have you ever found that after a while your wonder at the world begins to diminish? Or does it, in fact, increase?

FH: Oh no, no. Because I am continually surprised by people and their wonderful interactions and by the permutations of society – that sort of thing. I did an extensive journalistic trip through the commune movement in the U.S. and marveled at it.

DW: Did part of that go into the novel *Hellstrom's Hive*?

FH: Well, it's hard to say that it did and hard to say that it didn't, I don't consciously recall ever mining that, no. But we're all products of what we learn, you know.

DW: Do you ever find yourself recognising things – first of all, perhaps, do you ever re-read your stuff very much?

FH: Not very much, no. Not unless I'm going to do a sequel and need to get into the beat of it – which I did with *Dosadi*, of course. I read *Whipping Star*. In fact, I went right back through the Jorj X. McKie file for that. But that's to build the kind of verisimilitude that the surround has. It's necessary for a story. It has to happen sometimes.

DW: And do you recognise parts of your previous self when you do that? Can you see certain of your earlier characteristics?

FH: Oh yes, partly. I don't know of a writer who wouldn't like to go back to some of his work and re-write it. In fact, I've recently had the pleasure of doing that. You see, what's happening here is that I' writing a sequel to a book and it deals with a previous book – so I don't like to talk about it too much. Collect the energy that's going into the book, you see, If I talk about it I use that up on the tape.

DW: And do you find the books that you read influence what you're writing at the time?

FH: Oh, I'm sure they do. Why wouldn't they? If you gain something from what you read…

DW: You assimilate it all into the mix.

FH: Of course. Ue stand on each other's shoulders, and on the shoulders of history. I'm sure that's true. And always have done... Have you any final questions?

DW: I don’t think there are any final questions. At least, I’ve not prepared any.

FH: That's true.

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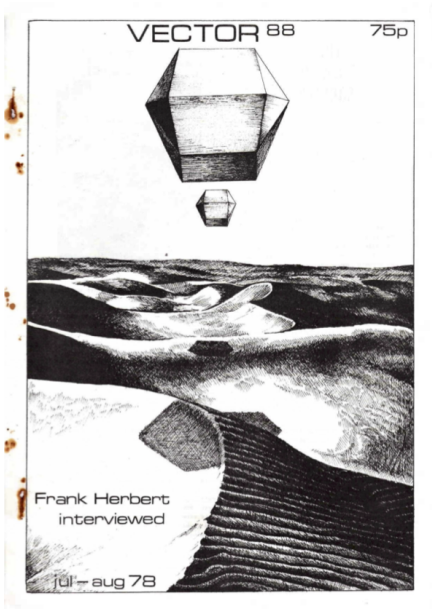

Future Life, 1979

The Father of Dune, by MALCOM BRENNER, FUTURE LIFE #14, 1979

The creator of Dune *talks about his craft, his preoccupation with alternative energy sources and his work on the upcoming $40 million* Dune *movie.*

Best known for his Hugo and Nebula award-winning novel *Dune* Herbert is the author of some 20 other popular novels including *Children of Dune*, *Dune Messiah*, *The Dosadi Experiment* and *Destination: Void*. A one-time newspaper man, logging over ten years with the San Francisco Examiner, Herbert today lives with his family on a farm in Washington state. One of his, major projects is to transform his six-acre spread into an "'ecological demonstration"' with a five-year plan showing that a high quality of life can be maintained with minimal drain on the total energy system.

Earlier this year, it was announced that Dino DeLaurentiis would adapt *Dune* to the widescreen. Herbert is currently working on the screenplay of this long-awaited science fiction epic adventure film. His latest book, a novel, was published in 1979. Entitled *The Jesus Incident*, it was a collaborative work with writer Bill Ransom and based on the future universe created for *Destination: Void*.

FUTURE LIFE: Are you very busy at the moment?

HERBERT: You have no idea. I really should be upstairs right now. Normally I write four to five hours a day; recently it’s been eight to ten.

FUTURE LIFE: What's the work you’re completing before you begin the *Dune* script?

HERBERT: Two books, one fiction, one non-fiction. I'm not trying to be shy, but I don't talk about work in progress. The best advice I ever had, which I invariably give to would-be writers, is, you use the same energies to talk about it you would to write about it. You should be very jealous of those energies. Put them on paper, not on the air.

FUTURE LIFE: Everyone who has ever read your work is interested in the recently announced movie version of *Dune*. Are you at liberty to talk about it?

HERBERT: I can tell you what I know, but I don't know everything. I have no idea who’s going to play what, except that Dino DeLaurentis agrees with me that Paul should be an unknown, somebody who hasn't been on the screen before. We're looking for an important director, somebody with a superb track record. The problem is to find somebody who isn't previously committed.

They are talking about a budget of up to $40 million. It turns my head. I can't even think in those terms. I will be doing the screenplay; the film treatments, the rough outlines, have already been done.

FUTURE LIFE: How do you feel about working with DeLaurentiis?

HERBERT: I happen to be an admirer of his. I don't admire everything that he's done, and he knows that well! But he's a man who, when he puts his mind to it, has superb ability. He takes shortcuts, sometimes, but he's promised me no shortcuts with *Dune*.

He wants to do a classic, quality movie; I quote, "to rank with *Gone With The Wind* and the equivalent." We've been very open with each other about this. I told him at the beginning I have misgivings about all of Hollywood, and not from any of the classic author vs. screen production points of view, because to translate a book to the screen is as though you were translating a work from one language to another. In a book, it's easy to create new concepts, because the reader can supply all the necessary nerve endings. Like radio; you can build a set on a page that no movie producer could afford. Given those restrictions, and an understanding of the problem, even then, because of the shortcuts filmmaking tends to take, you still have misgivings. One of the fallacies in Hollywood is that the only reality they need to worry about is: "Can you put it on the screen?"

If it's on the screen, people will believe it. In Méliès' day, this was true, but not any more. We have a far more sophisticated audience to consider, an audience conditioned by experiences Hollywood hasn't even picked up on yet. Like commercials. Have you ever

thought about the conditioning factors involved in getting people to accept a premise in a commercial?

FUTURE LIFE: People tend to be more skeptical of what's on the screen because of all the garbage thrown at them.

HERBERT: Right. Yet another aspect of this conditioning is the advent of quick cutting. People today will accept the fact that you've gone to a different scene because a different scene has suddenly flashed up.

FUTURE LIFE: Will the *Dune* movie expand the special effects art form to capture your ideas, like the mile-long sandworms?

HERBERT: Oh yes. I'm no neophyte in this field. I've worked as a TV news cameraman. I also doctored the script for Dino's new version of Flash Gordon. The original writer was good, but because he wasn't a science fiction writer, he made certain mistakes of verisimilitude which I was asked to clean up. The difference between the amateur and the professional in many fields is largely an attention to detail. With computer enhancement, we can mingle different layers of action, shot at different times, absolutely perfect in every detail, in terms of foreground-background relationships, the light sources, shadows, everything. The second unit can get a background plate, and a computer scanning of shadow and motion effects will give you a placement format for lighting the action in the foreground.

FUTURE LIFE: So even if the shot was hand-held, you can program the „bounce factor" into the computer?

HERBERT: Indeed you can. And you can relate what goes on in the foreground precisely to the background. I'm talking about an actual scene layout, and tracking motion of the lights, for example, which is now available to us.

FUTURE LIFE: These techniques will all be used on *Dune*?

HERBERT: I've been assured that they will. The essence of drama is that you believe it's happening to somebody. We're going to go for utter reality.

FUTURE LIFE: Your career as a writer began with newspaper work in cities such as Seattle, Portland and San Francisco. What got you into that field?

HERBERT: Natural attraction. It's a great way to get a general education, if you have a curiosity bug, as I have. If you follow up the things you're interested in, if you don’t just skim the surface of a story, it's great.

FUTURE LIFE: Have you always wanted to write?

HERBERT: I started at age eight. I went back to one of the stories from my childhood about four years ago. My mother had saved it. Very childish. Interestingly enough, though, it had all the elements right in the lead: dramatic things about to happen, a protagonist who wanted something very badly, an exotic setting. Even then I instinctively knew enough to put the time of day and season in, so people wouldn't get their own ideas and flop over them later.

FUTURE LIFE: Your books are very detailed. How do you do research?

HERBERT: I call it "loading the system.“ It's almost as though you were putting all the information in a computer, but I don't mean by that to compare the human brain to a computer. You go out and find everything you can about the subject in question.

FUTURE LIFE: You interview specialists?

HERBERT: Yes, on a quid pro quo basis – favor for favor. They put out a lot of time for me, so I write articles or papers for them, do research. I say to specialists: "I'm an expert at organizing and writing

coherent articles, translating the esoteric into general readership. And you, in turn, know some things that I want to know. What do you want written? How can I help *you*?"'

Even early in my career, people were open and willing to communicate. Part of the success of the transaction process is having a good, clear assessment of what you can do. I have no false pride about this. I know what my major talent is. It's a tradeable thing. You'd be surprised at some of the names that have said, "Sure, come right in." I've had this ability since I started doing professional newspaper reporting at age 17. In a less skillful form, but I could do it commercially.

FUTURE LIFE: Where do you start building a novel?

HERBERT: I begin with the kind of a conceptual overview, which you might think of as an idea, but "idea" tends to misrepresent what a conceptual overview amounts to. Such an overview might be the one out of which the *Dune* trilogy grew; which was to do a book about the messiah impulse – the hero mythology in human societies. Weil, that's a very big grab-bag. That umbrella will cover a lot of ground.

FUTURE LIFE: It's been heavily used, to say the least.

HERBERT: Yeah, but not in the particular way I chose, and that's the essence of how an idea is different from its realization. Most

people think a story's the idea. It's not. It's how you develop it.

FUTURE LIFE: In the case of *Dune*, how did this development occur to you? Are you the type of writer who works more from the intellect, or the emotions?

HERBERT: I try to strike a balance. It's all right for a plot to have a message, but if no one's going to read it why waste your time? It has to be entertaining. I°'m in the entertainment business and I've never, never mistaken that.

FUTURE LIFE: Do you aspire to Art, or should it be termed Literature?

HERBERT: To say yes to that, you have to believe your own publicity, and I assiduously avoid that. The only valid critic any art form has is time. Does it endure? And, obviously, I'm never going to know that--at least not in my present form! I always set out to do the most entertaining job I can, even for newspaper work. I recognized early that there is no such thing as an unbiased approach to any subject. The great myth of American reporting, that I'm just here to get the facts and won't even be in the story, is horse pucky. Every word you choose comes out of your own prejudices.

FUTURE LIFE: Could that same type of thinking be applied to our

definition of objectivity in science?

HERBERT: Oh, absolutely. You see, science has built some marvelous straw men. One of them is emotion. Logic rejects emotion… yet logic rejects it emotionally. I say that you don't understand one without the other.

FUTURE LIFE: So where is the "objectivity" of science not misplaced?

HERBERT: When it's doing what it does best-solving problems, answering unknowns. Scientists tend to get on linear tracks which dig a deeper and deeper channel, so they never see over the top. Our nation, our world, desperately needs more generalists. It's a matter of human survival, I think. We need people who are busy building overviews, people who say "The king is naked!"

FUTURE LIFE: Aside from entertainment, is that your job?

HERBERT: Oh yeah. I'm a yellow journalist. I've never avoided that label. In fact, I kind of revel in it. I love to turn over rocks and see what scurries.

FUTURE LIFE: What's your scientific background?

HERBERT: Math, physics, psychology, with some specially interesting sidelines: energy chemistry, micro-climates. Anybody in my field has to know what's going on in research and development. That's one of the reasons I'm installing a very sophisticated computer in my home.

FUTURE LIFE: Tell us about it.

HERBERT: Within weeks I'll have a ten- and-a-half million byte system, and if you know anything about computers, that’s leverage! It'll really be three computers in one, with three different, very advanced chips, each doing a separate thing. It's being programmed by a friend of mine, a superb technician, from the point of view of the needs of the operator, not from the technological viewpoint of the machine. It’s going to be a very sophisticated typewriter and note filing system, but also will time-share with another terminal for my wife Bev to do our household accounts on. I write in the round, in the sense that a story kind of expands as I write it. I get ideas for this chapter back here, or that one up there… I make notes and slip them into folders. I then assemble the complete chapter later. With a computer, I can do that with extreme rapidity. I'm not fumbling for papers. The computer has a sophisticated word-processing program. I'll have a vertical format CRT with a variable separator line. I can have, say, three lines of notes at the top and the rest text, or three lines of text scrolling under and the rest notes. Also a fast-response "address of addresses" system which brings up notes if I forget the address. I won't have to wait to get to a position in the book. I'll go right to it.

FUTURE LIFE: Sounds like the ultimate writer's tool!

HERBERT: It is. I'm designing it as we go along. It'll have a variable dictionary that will respond to my idiosyncrasies. I tend to talk to the page. I'm aware that the best use of language talks to the ears, not the eyes.

FUTURE LIFE: The texture of the writing.

HERBERT: … is oral, rather than strictly visual. I tend to make homonymic errors, writing "there" for "their." for instance. My dictionary will flag that. At the end of the day all I'll have to do is scroll through the copy and check everything where the cursor is blinking. Makes the process of correction vastly easier; takes the tiresome part out of writing! I'll just be able to sit there and create.

FUTURE LIFE: Do you foresee such devices coming into widespread use?

HERBERT: A necessity. I foresee all kinds of specialty writing where the program takes care of the incidental bookkeeping. Writing a screenplay, for example, where you have character names and a split page: dialogue on one side, visual on the other. That indexing

can be handled automatically by a computer so you don't even have to think about it. See how that would speed you up!

FUTURE LIFE: Arriving at the topic of actual creation, when you get down to putting words on the page, how do you do it?

HERBERT: I look at it as a schizophrenic process. You are playing the different roles of the characters you're writing about, and you'll stop and look at the scene the way you would any scene, and you'll play it on the screen of your mind. It's more of a photographic process. I think of the reader's eye as a camera that I control, So I can move you in close to look at a detail or back for an entire scene. There are not only sights and sounds, there's wind, there's temperature, there's smell – all of the things you would expect in any ambient atmosphere. You select from them, and play them on the tape which is the reader.

FUTURE LIFE: How do you control information which doesn't fit into a pictorial format? Philosophical abstractions, for instance?

HERBERT: We have more senses than our eyes and ears. The best way to do it is through a character, his response to his environment. Because a story has to be something that happens to people. Philosophical concepts can be made very immediate by the influence of their consequences on people. I was playing that game all through the *Dune* trilogy. We have one idealized version of a philosophy: the great leader will save us from ourselves! My reading

of history says that heroes, great leaders, have been disasters.

FUTURE LIFE: So the man on the white horse turns out to be wearing black armor?

HERBERT: Invariably. The great leader has wrought havoc, and that was the thematic approach I took in the *Dune* trilogy. First, build up a very real, imaginable hero, out of the classic mold, whose own intentions are the best. An admirable person. Then show the clay feet as the power is magnetically attracted to him. I think of the *Dune* trilogy as being one book. Parts of *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune* were written before *Dune* was finished. The plot of all three was laid out before I began to write *Dune*. Our culture demands that the hero be, and remain, admirable. So, if you show the degeneration that comes with the execution of power, this is considered unacceptable.

FUTURE LIFE: In your work there's frequently the theme of people versus the power structure, a common one in science fiction. Could this be because science fiction writers tend to feel alienated from their times?

HERBERT: No, I don't think we feel alienated. We just have a different view of our times. You're looking at motion from a great distance, so you can pick out things that aren't readily visible to other people. I think I have a clearer view, based on the accuracy of my predictions, of what's going on in the world; whether it's an

absolute view, I would be the last one to pretend *that*! I only know it works. *Dune* is a prediction come true. Read the headlines. Back in 1948, I was driving an "economy" car and warning people about our dependence on a single, scarce resource- petroleum. The spacefaring Bene Genesseratt culture's need for the clairvoyant worm-spice was written as an analogy to our dependence on the oil cartel, on an energy source that can be controlled by a very small group of people.

The historic term for this is „hydraulic despotism," a term that comes to us from the Mid-East, where water is subject to the control of local tyrants. Now, a cartel doesn't have to be set up with a document or even a handshake. It's a group of people who have a common interest in a common behavior. The problem isn't the Arabs, it's our dependence, and the historical consequences of such behavior are predictable, and usually disastrous. We have the knowledge and technology right now to extract oil from shale, using lasers, for the same prices we're paying. Why aren't we doing it? Because certain powerful vested interests would squeeze everything out of us if a sufficient number of politicians could be convinced they would profit by it. I'm certain some of our politicians are in the oil cartel's pocket.

So I see the movement of forces in our society in a different way than most people. I say things, and people are shocked. Like that the legal profession has raped our society. It has. It has weakened the society to a dangerous point. I get police and medical people angry with me because they think I'm attacking them. I'm not. I'm describing a psychological process. The process of self-preservation, you might call it; the unconscious behavior all people engage in which

maintains the necessity for their speciality. The things police do to maintain crime. The things doctors do to maintain the need for their ministrations. You occasionally get an enlightened member of these

groups who recognizes this behavior. I'm not attacking people. I'm describing a behavior whose con sequences are predictable.

FUTURE LIFE: Do you feel people's behavior can be predicted?

HERBERT: Not entirely, no. But I think certain patterns of behavior betray very clear consequences. It's the background of great tragedy. It isn't hard, for example, to see the hollowness in statements such as "you make me angry." If I'm angry, *I* make me angry. Every person participates in what's happening to him or her to some degree or other. There are exceptions to this. If a meteor strikes, it's hard to acknowledge your participation in *that*, except for the bad choice of being born on this planet. But there are other categories of behavior which clearly involve at least unconscious personal choices. We have labels for these things: "the rat race."

FUTURE LIFE: Applying this ethic to our oil habit you mentioned earlier, you're actually involved with developing alternative energy systems, aren't you?

HERBERT: Yeah. I'm having a solar collector system installed in the house and greenhouse that will supply about 15 percent of our energy. With a group of associates, I'm also developing a new type of windmill, based on the squirrel-cage principle, but with some improvements in aerodynamic design. We took a close look at the problem of heating homes and came up with an extremely simple, yet *new* answer. When is a house losing the most heat? When it's

cold and the wind is blowing, inducing a wind-chill factor on the building. Well, why not let the wind turn a generator that warms the house electrically? The harder the wind blows, the more it heats, and the heat-loss curve flattens out. We have a prototype of this windmill mounted on a truck chassis with a calibrated speedometer and we make our test runs on the highway.

FUTURE LIFE: Since we're talking about energy for the future, what are your feelings on nuclear energy?

HERBERT: I'm vehemently opposed to it, because it's a damn dirty thing to do to our children. The irresponsibility of leaving large quantities of dangerous waste products for our descendants to cope with conflicts with the ideals on which this nation was founded. The cost-accounting hasn't been done yet, and we'd just be trading one form of easily dominated dependence for another. Nuclear centralization makes shutdowns more crippling, because so many people depend on the energy, and makes the system far more vulnerable to terrorists. I'm for decentralizing our energy generation.

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Frank Herbert: The Father of "Dune"

The creator of "Dune" talks about his craft, his preoccupation with alternative energy sources and his work on the upcoming $40 million "Dune" movie.

By MALCOLM BRENNER

Who Writes Science Fiction?, 1979

by Charles Platt in Who Writes Science Fiction?, Savoy Books,1980

I have not read *Dune*.

There it is: my awful confession. I now stand exposed, as a poseur, a total fraud; I have written science fiction, I have been a dedicated science-fiction fan, I have taught science fiction at college, I have been a science-fiction editor at two New York publishers, I have run a science-fiction magazine, I have reviewed science fiction, and now I have even interviewed Frank Herbert, while being secretly, unforgivably ignorant of Herbert's most famous novel – in fact it must be the most widely-known science-fiction novel published in America by *any* author, in the last fifteen years.

I have read other things that Herbert has written, beginning with his classic *Under Pressure*, back when I was a teenager, and I admire his work. I was a subscriber to *Analog* when that magazine first serialized *Dune*, and I did try to read it even then. I tried again (unsuccessfully) in 1970, when a friend of mine who worked for the U.N. told me that *Dune* was the most talked-about book among all the anthropologists he knew. I tried even harder, a few years later, when my college science-fiction class voted unanimously to include the book in their reading list.

But these well-intended attempts have been total failures. *Dune* – like other massive epics such as *I Will Fear No Evil* and *Dhalgren* – has always defeated me.

I gave it one last try, a week or so before I went to meet Mr Herbert. (As you might imagine, my conscience was bothering me.) I made myself comfortable, for a long, serious reading stint, with cushions behind me and the book propped up on my knees. I think I fell asleep somewhere around page six.

So, the next day, I read *The Jesus Incident* instead (Herbert's most recent novel at the time of writing – a collaboration with Bill Ransom). I enjoyed that; it was easy; shorter than *Dune* and not at all obsessively detailed. So much for my personal inadequacies. Now for the shortcomings of this interview. I had planned to interview Mr Herbert at his retreat in Port Townsend, at the northern tip of Washington state. Starting from Los Angeles, I was going to drive all the way up the coast, visiting other authors en route.

But my time on the West Coast happened to coincide with the 1979 gasoline crisis. No way could I drive 3,000 miles, round-trip. And my budget wouldn't stretch to a multiple-hop plane ride, with subsequent car rentals in each city. I had to abandon my itinerary.

The only chance I had to meet Frank Herbert was when he came down to Los Angeles, later in the month, for the National Booksellers Association fair, where he spent four days doing public-relations work and promoting his books. I don't like trying to fit a civilised conversation into such chaotic, distracting events, but I had no choice.

He suggested we do the interview in his hotel room on Sunday at 8AM, over breakfast. Now, to me, breakfast is a leisurely meal eaten between about 10:30 and 11:30 while sitting half-dressed, reading the morning mail, and making business phone calls to catch editors before they go out for their three-hour lunches. The idea of being awake and alert at 8AM to meet this man (whose most famous novel I had never read) did not sound plausible. But I could hardly quibble;

Mr Herbert, obviously, was very busy, and tightly scheduled. Breakfast at eight? Of course!

I remember struggling out of bed at some strange hour; the sunlight seemed to be shining from a peculiar angle, and there were no cars on the freeways. I drove to some weird, futuristic fortress of a hotel, whose towers seemed to have been hewn from gray rock. It had terrifying glass-walled elevators which ran up the outside of the building, making you feel as if gravity had suddenly failed, and you were floating uncontrollably into the sky. At 8AM.

Mr and Mrs Herbert were bright-eyed and alert, very jolly and charming, in their weird, futuristic, wedge-shaped room (like a pie-slice in the circular gray tower). I set up my microphone on a breakfast trolley. Our conversation was interspersed with long pauses, while Mr Herbert ate his cantaloupe melon, drank his tea, and consumed several slices of toast. A difficult context in which to gain intimate insight into the mind and motives of an author (whose most famous novel I had never read).

But, enough excuses. Despite all the peculiar circumstances. I think the interview went extremely well – even if we didn't talk much about That Book.

Frank Herbert has a Santa-Claus beard and a round, cheerful face. As an ex-newspaperman, he seems very much at ease meeting people. This is not to say he is easygoing, however; behind the friendly manner there are walls of privacy, and a strong sense of separate identity; he very much believes in traditional American ideas about self-help, independence, and freedom from most kinds of interference. And he does not suffer those whom he considers to be fools.

“I’m a farm boy. It's very interesting; you can detect self-starting characteristics in this society, of various degrees of strength, and they are strongest among people who have had some kind of rural upbringing at a very impressionable state. When you come to the time of year when you're making hay, and the hay-baler breaks down, and it's the weekend and the handy little hay-baler repair store is closed, you don't say, Well. there'll be no hay this year. You leap in and repair the thing. You don't even *question* that you can repair it. Obviously you can. My father was a master mechanic; I grew up with a screwdriver in one hand and a pair of pliers in the other – you know, that sort of thing.”

“I always had a curiosity about engineering, and no doubt that I could do it. I think that self-limitation is the major limiting factor for most people in the world. People could do far more things than they believe they can. They've been led to believe in these limitations by various factors – the way they're brought up, and their families. If you have a quiescent population, it's much easier to govern; you don't want a lot of people out there doing strange things, producing new things, because new things often-times are dangerous to the people in power.”

“I have a standard axiom: all governments lie. Don't believe anything they say. And corporations are only kinds of government – do you realise that there are more than twenty multinational corporations in the world right now that have budgets larger than France's budget? Damn few people ever see it in those terms. I'm with John Kenneth Galbraith: I don't believe we have a free market any more. I don't believe we've had it for a long time. The United States is fussing around over an energy shortage; the real problem is that we have developed a very sensitive dependency, and there's no essential need for this, in the structure of our society or in the resources that are available to us. For example, I didn't have to look very far before I found out that the Alien Property Custodian of the United States

had confiscated patents and other factors on hydrogenisation processes, from the I.G. Farben cartel, during and after World War II, and those hydrogenisation processes plus our present state-of-the-art technology in laser furnaces provide the two essential tools which could get the oil out of the shale in Montana and surrounding areas at a competitive price. We could be in full production up there within about three years, with a resource that would last this nation – even with projected increases – approximately 400 years. My best estimate is that, because of our dependency [presumably, on foreign oil sources] if we set up a cash programme to do this, we'd have the screws thrown to us. We right now are dependent for most of our oil on shipments from outside our borders. Even if we could get the programme through a congress which contains members who have been bought by this cartel – this monopolistic group – then the second stage, at the barricades, would be to really cut our supply."

"I think the oil companies have correctly projected the political consequences of admitting this. I find myself in a strange position in that I don't believe in socialised industry, or in managed economies – managed economies always require a compromise. You build a very large bureaucracy to manage it, and the bureaucracy inevitably makes mistakes. Bureaucracies hide their mistakes, because people's careers are tied to those mistakes. Therefore, bureaucracies are a perfect mechanism for perpetuating mistakes. I still think an adjusted capitalist system is best, because it breaks down from its own excesses. When it makes too many mistakes it really falls apart, and you have to readjust the whole thing. In an oversimplified form, this is what I think about it."

"The thing a lot of people don't realise is that a cartel can occur without there being any secret meetings in Amsterdam, Geneva, or any place else. All a cartel needs is a common recognition of common problems and common solutions. The oil cartel has been formed that way and, as in most cases of predation, it takes little

account of the population on which it is the predator. The extent to which directorships interlock, between the oil industry and the automobile industry, is a much-overlooked element of the whole problem. I've had some arguments with automobile industry people; they say the public *demands* big gas-guzzling cars. And all the while the industry is spending millions of dollars on advertising to convince the public that the big gas-guzzler is a sexy machine which they've got to own, otherwise they're nerds. What hypocrisy! The analogy of predation is a good one, the industry has never really seen itself in this light, but ought to. Because, in a natural system, or in the wild, let's put it that way, because 'natural system' can be a very misleading label. In the wild, when the population on which the predators feed decreases, the predators decrease – or they start feeding on each other. I'm sure the analogy is apt. It already happens: smaller businesses are gobbled up by larger ones."

Heavy stuff, to discuss over an early breakfast. But "discuss" is hardly the word to use, since Herbert is delivering what is basically a lecture. And from his style I would guess he has delivered this lecture many times before. He speaks with righteousness and conviction: the lone individual vs. Big Business, pointing out a few "things a lot of people don't realise". But his monologue carries more authority than similar stories I have heard from other lone voices, because Herbert has had first-hand experience of his subject matter. His years as a journalist brought him into contact with aspects of politics, and his self-sufficient belief in repairing his own hay-baler (so to speak) has led him to make interesting efforts, at tackling the energy crisis through research of his own:

"I'm working with John Ottenheimer, who was Frank Lloyd Wright's last personal student. John and I looked at the literature and decided that nobody had ever built a proper wind machine. They were approaching it from what appeared to be the correct direction; but in the last 1,500 years we've discovered quite a bit more about

aerodynamics than was available when our present model of wind machine was invented."

"We've made a breakthrough on the relationship of how you put the wind into a wind machine, and how you take the energy out. That's essentially what we've patented. It involves the physical problem that you have, of trying to take energy out of a rotating object when the wind going through it will defeat you on the back side. and the turbulence internally will defeat you. too. We have a mechanical system of answering that problem."

"We've built some quite large models. We took a wrecked van – a cab had been badly crushed, but the mechanical parts were in very good condition. We built our model on the truck, because our investigation showed that a wind tunnel does not give you accurate information about a wind machine." Thus, rather than blow wind through the machine, under inadequately controlled conditions, Herbert and his partner decided to move the machine through the wind, in the open air, to test the gadget's efficiency. "We built it on this truck, and the local police calibrated our speedometer for us – with their radar gun! – so that we know when we're going 50 miles an hour. We run it back and forth to get an average of the variations in the ambient air. We built a mechanical dynamometer and brought a digital tachometer, to tell us how fast we're going and how many inch-pounds we're getting from it."

Herbert believes that this kind of jargon shouldn't bother people; he blames poor education, by teachers who don't really understand mathematics, as the cause of public unease when faced with technology. He says he had very little formal training in the sciences himself:

"I was a newspaper reporter, photographer, editor, 'hey-you', since age seventeen. I picked up a technical knowledge as I went along.

You'd be surprised what you learn as a newspaper man."

"You can go knock on the door, and if you're offering something in exchange you'd be surprised at the big names who'd be delighted to have you there – have you as a student, or whatever. Some of the people whom I have worked for, their names would probably surprise you." He says this with some pride and satisfaction.

"My technique was to say, 'You know something that I want to know. I have one talent: I'm good at writing and organising. If you have any papers you want written. any research you want done, here is your handy tacky. In return, here's what *I* want.' You don't get turned down under those circumstances. You go ask them questions, and they direct your entry into very esoteric subjects."

However, all of this was tangential to his direct ambition:

"I knew when I was still a child in grade school that I wanted to be, quote, 'a author', unquote. It's what I was going to do. I haven't made comparisons; I've just plunged ahead. I saw that the best way to break into the market was through short stories, and did; I made a name for myself with short stories first, then went to novels because they're more lucrative, and you can do more things with them. But while we were doing all of this we had children to raise. My wife Bev was our main source of income on many occasions; I stayed home and took care of the children and did the cooking and the laundry, and wrote, because the typewriter was at home. She went off to the office, and bought our beans. I find it interesting that our society is becoming more and more acceptant of this; there's still resistance to it – the macho dream still exists. But the macho dream, of course, originated in very primitive times, under extraordinary conditions. Now, we're in a transition period, in more ways than one. The military, as an entity in society as we have known it, is dead, and doesn't yet realise it. It is fast becoming possible for an individual to

be as destructively powerful as any military force that can be brought to bear in this world. And there's no way that can be stopped. The computer is going to do no more than accelerate it; and in the United States we are looking at a runaway growth of computers. Right now for $600 I can buy a computer which is more powerful than one I would have had to pay upwards of $200,000 for, in 1962. It is smaller; I can carry it around like a portable typewriter. Most people think of computers as number-crunchers; they've been taught to believe this, by people whose interests are clearly in the maintenance of a monopoly. They've maintained their monopoly by making it appear that computers were very difficult to learn to use, and that there was no way of ever changing that. Not true! The computer freaks have already changed it."

"Bev and I are putting in a system at our own place, which is being tailored to us. It may very well turn out to be the most powerful word-processor available, because with the mixing of several chips I'm going to be able to do a number of things very rapidly. I'll be able to go right to any place in a long text, and not sit there waiting for a minute or 30 seconds for it to find that place. Floppy disc, 21 million bytes capacity on four drivers, plus very large RAM and ROM. It'll be mainly for word processing, but it will be time-sharing also, and we'll be doing our household books on it. I have an electronics engineer, a brilliant electronics engineer; I told him what I wanted the computer to do, and that's what I'm getting. He's building it for me – even having the boards etched."

Once again, it seems, a question which started out on a personal level has led, through free-association at the breakfast table, into a discussion of political and sociological macrosystems, and now into a jargon-filled area of technology. It's as if this is the conversational zone that Herbert prefers to be in. I'm interested in computers myself, so we go further into the technical details of the system which he is having custom-built to his specification. But I realise not

everyone will want to know how many bytes of RAM will be available – let alone the ROM! – and there's no avoiding the fact that it makes more sense to talk about the phenomenon which made it possible for Herbert to afford this exotic technology in the first place. I refer, of course, to *Dune*. At the time of our interview, he has been writing the script for the forthcoming film of the book. Did he ever dream, at the beginning, that his novel would be so successful and earn so much money, in its various editions and sequels?

“I simply never considered it. It didn't enter into my considerations. You know, it was turned down by every major publisher. We have some marvellous letters, rejecting it! According to my literary agent, if you include the phone calls where they said there was no sense in submitting the manuscript – ‘We don't do that sort of thing’ – there were 22 rejections. Eleven rejections in writing, from major publishers.”

I ask him if this tells him anything about the publishing industry. The answer I get is more or less the one I expect. from this individual who distrusts larger organisations:

“It was an alarming shock to me, to be in New York City. I was a naive western boy, who believed that god must be in New York City.” He laughs. “Well, let's say, I thought the best gravitated to New York City. I arrived there one time, with my satchel in my hand, you know, and my turned-up-brim hat, staring at the tall buildings. And I was asked to sit in on an editorial conference, to decide on the promotion of one of my books. I won't tell you what publishing house, but it was a long time ago. Before Berkley [his current publisher]. We were ten minutes into this conference when I realised that I knew more about the market, and what was really happening out in the marketplace, and more about what should be done to work in that marketplace, than these experts who were sitting around this table. I can still remember the feeling of betrayal – a kind

of a loss – because I felt suddenly all alone. Here I am in this place, they're supposed to know what they're doing, and they don't! They don't know what they're doing!" He laughs; the laughter turns into diminishing chuckles; finally, it subsides. "So we went our own ways. I just quietly pulled out of all this and went on the lecture circuit, where you really have to be up-front, especially at the university or college level. Boy, do they unmask the phonies quickly! So I just did my own, and to hell with New York. They didn't know. Their high-level book tours where you go and meet the critics… there is no critic, I believe, myself included, whose taste is the absolute sine qua non. They really do not control the market. The market goes on without them, and Dune is a perfect example of the truth of that. Do you know that Dune was panned by every critic?"

I admit that, actually, I didn't know.

"Not one liked it," says Herbert.

"After a long time, Arthur Clarke sent us a review from India that was good," his wife reminds him.

He nods. "Bev is right. And here and there you might get a little crossroads newspaper in Ohio, with a young reviewer who probably went to the local junior college, and they liked it."

Has Herbert received a satisfying audience response from his readers?

"The feedback has been very rewarding. Because of the kinds of questions I get, I've been able to direct attention straight at what I was doing, and there's no equivocation about it. People say, for example, 'Were you forming a cult?' and I say, for the love of god. no! Quite the opposite – don't follow me! Cult leaders have feet of clay, if not worse. They lead 900 people into suicide; they lead their followers into the coliseum where they get to be eaten by lions.

What insanity! Really. I have an initial: G.P.M.F.F. God preserve me from fanatics.

“The bottom line in the *Dune* trilogy is: beware of heroes. Much better to rely on your own judgement, and your own mistakes.”

A fitting note to end on. We have finished breakfast; I’m sure Mr Herbert could talk for at least another hour on aspects of politics, business, and technology, but he has to move on to the book fair, where he will be autographing *Dune* and his other books, and generally oiling the machinery of media-commerce As a writer, at least, he has proved that the lone individual can exercise better judgement that those people who are supposed to be experts. Whether this ability really extends into other areas – such as developing alternative energy sources – has yet to be demonstrated as convincingly. In the meantime, it must be immensely satisfying to Frank Herbert that his book has been such an immense success, despite the failings of an unnamed New York publisher and the scorn of all those critics. In fact *Dune's* success is so widespread now, and such a fact of life, surely it can't matter to Mr Herbert – I hope – that an individual still exists who must admit, in shame, he has not yet been able to read the novel.

(Los Angeles, May 1979)

The Plowboy Interview, 1981

by Pat Stone, Mother Earth News, 1981

By profession, Frank Herbert is a science fiction author – and quite a successful one at that. Indeed, many of his novels are regarded as classics in the field. What's more, a major film studio is well into a years-long project to convert Frank's Dune *tales into a feature-length motion picture.*

Of course, Herbert has written other distinguished fiction as well, but a list of his literary achievements would hardly serve to sum up this unique individual. The Washington State author staunchly maintains that any person's life should consist of much more than his or her work role (even if that role is a prominent one). He puts a lot of energy into his "nonprofessional" time. In keeping with his beliefs, Frank's a devoted father, spouse, and family man. He's also an avid alternative energy experimenter who's created his own solar collector, windplant, and methane fuel generator, all on an Olympic Peninsula homestead.

Equally important, Mr. Herbert is an outgoing social commentator who combines a strong sense of traditional values with a radical's zest for questioning (and even parodying) the basic assumptions of our culture. Staffer Pat Stone – after being sent out to Port Townsend, Washington to talk with Frank – had this to say about his encounter with the creator of the exotic, water-poor planet, Dune:

“Interviewing Frank Herbert was both a truly enjoyable and sometimes frustrating experience. The man seems charged with energy. He has an active and impish sense of humor – we did a lot of laughing – and a warm, hospitable nature that truly touched me. At the same time, though, Mr. Herbert's answers often bewildered me with their unexpectedness. He obviously relished escaping any attempts to ’pigeonhole’ his ideas, and even mimicked my role as interviewer by taking my picture once while I was photographing him! I tell you, at times I felt like a bit character in one of his novels who attempts – usually in vain – to keep up with the words of the book's brilliant protagonist.”

Frank Herbert's ideas concerning the serious problems facing our society today and how we might successfully deal with them are often challenging and present a strong counterpoint to the views of his fellow science fiction writer, Isaac Asimov. All of us here at Mother Earth News *hope that you find the author/homesteader's concepts and anecdotes – as presented in the edited transcript that follows – to be as thought-provoking as we have.*

STONE: Mr. Herbert, a little voice in the back of my mind keeps telling me that many readers of '*Mother Earth News*' will probably wonder why our do-it-yourself, ecology-oriented magazine is interviewing a prominent science fiction writer.

HERBERT: Who, me? A science fiction writer? I've always considered myself to be a yellow journalist.

STONE: I beg your pardon?

HERBERT: Like the best muckraking yellow journalists of the news media, I ask questions that other people aren't asking, and do a lot of investigating into the world around me. So even though I try to write entertaining, future-oriented stories, my books always contain messages that – I believe – are relevant to our situation today.

STONE: So you use your futuristic fiction to comment on contemporary problems?

HERBERT: Yes, but don't think that's all I try to do when I write. People don't buy my books because they think they're going to learn something from them. The fact is, if you told somebody, “Listen, I'm going to teach you a lesson that's so important it might even change your life,” that individual might say, “Oh boy, do that!” But if you then did instruct the person as you promised – and that's all you did – he or she would resent it.

So I try to give my readers real entertainment as well as my point of view. They can take either one, or both!

STONE: How did you begin your career as a “writer with a message?”

HERBERT: Oh, I knew what I wanted to do with my life even when I was quite young. In fact, on my eighth birthday I told my family, “I'm going to be a author.”

STONE: They must have been tempted to take that remark as a joke.

HERBERT: Well, I got kidded a lot as a result of my statement, but – in truth – I've never really strayed far from that goal. I was employed as a newspaper writer for many years, and I took those jobs because I saw the field as a training ground that would financially support my own writing while helping me learn to use the tools of my trade. In addition, I put in some time as a radio and television commentator. And I've done a lot of photojournalism work. I was picture editor of the *San Francisco Examiner* for quite a few years.

STONE: Then did you glean the “message themes” for your fiction from exposure to contemporary news events?

HERBERT: Heck, no. I developed all of my basic ideas during my childhood years on our family's farm.

STONE: You were a farm boy?

HERBERT: I milked cows – by hand – for over half of my early childhood years on a small subsistence farm in Kitsap County, Washington. And I can still clench my hands like you wouldn't believe.

STONE: You must have had other chores, too.

HERBERT: Oh, yes. There were pigs to feed, and I had corn and such to hoe. I once even reared and canned 500 chickens as a 4-H project. We raised all our own food, so – although I grew up during the Depression – I never had to worry about being hungry. In fact, I remember those “bad years” as marvelous times because I spent them in the company of a kind of large, extended family. My father had six brothers, so I never lived far from aunts and uncles, and I had cousins all over the landscape.

And I learned, from childhood, that the family experience can be very important to an individual. Family life teaches a person to shoulder his or her share of responsibility. It's also quite a supportive structure… and can stage rituals in which all of the members are able to participate. A child can develop a sense of self-reliance and self-worth through involvement in such activities.

STONE: Did you work on your plans to be “an author” during those farm days?

HERBERT: Yes, I used to write awful poetry and crude childish

stories. I got my best storytelling practice, though, from being the yarn-spinner for all my cousins. Whenever the whole family got together, we youngsters would go off someplace by ourselves. The other children would come up with a title – something like “The Blood and the Vow” – and I'd have to make up a tale that fit it… one that, often as not, would scare the wits out of them.

STONE: How did you develop the concepts that have become the “hidden” messages in your stories?

HERBERT: First of all, my childhood days gave me some rock-ribbed ideas about the ways people should live together. To put my beliefs simply: I think we oug ht to be loyal to our friends, we ought to be truthful, we ought to be supportive of family members, and we ought to provide one another with help directly instead of delegating our good deeds to institutions.

I don't like governmental “helping” – or any kind of public charity system – because I learned early on that our society's institutions often weaken people's self-reliance and damage family bonds as well. Take education, for instance. The teaching of our young ought to be about equally divided between the family, which should lay the ground-work for the child's learning, and professionals who can pass on useful knowledge that the child's relatives might not have in their repertoire. Today, though, the professional education establishment assumes that the family doesn't know what its own members need or want. The result is a classic failure: an institutionalized system that does more harm than good.

Do you know that – in response to just that problem – my own family left the United States twice? On both occasions we went to live in

Mexico because I was not considered “qualified” to teach my children in the U.S., but could home-school them in Mexico. Our youngsters were taught at home when they were young, and they haven't suffered in the least from it.

STONE: So you think our country's methods of instruction have a lot to do with the destruction of many family values?

HERBERT: Absolutely. By the time you have three or four generations of people who are taught not to trust their families and their families’ knowledge, individuals can really become separated from their roots. The effect is to make people feel like lost wanderers, or to cause them to think of themselves only in the role of their jobs, which is a complete misrepresentation of what it means to be alive.

Another lesson I learned in childhood is that what people do is just as important as – and maybe more so than – what they say. I had a marvelous object lesson in the difference between words and actions when I was in fourth grade. In those days I was bored to death by school, so I tended to cause a lot of trouble.

One day our teacher, a great big woman who wore eye-glasses that looked like the bottoms of pop bottles, caught me in the middle of a particularly heinous prank. She told me to stay after school and added, “I just don't know what I'm going to do with you.”

Of course, I could imagine all kinds of horrible things she might do to me. Like the bastinado, or worse! But when school was over, she just made me sit and sit while she worked on papers. After what seemed like ages, she motioned me up to her desk, stared at me

awhile – I could feel two holes being burned right through me – and then resumed her paperwork.

STONE: You must have been terrified.

HERBERT: Oh, I was. Finally, she put her pencil down and said, “I just don't know what I'm going to do with you.” Well, it was all too much for me. I started to cry. She put her face right in front of mine then and said again! – “I just don't know what I'm going to do with you.” And I said through my sobs, “Why are you mad at me?”

With that, she grabbed me by the shoulders, began shaking me roughly, and cried, “I'm not mad at you, I'm not mad at you!” Well, I now know that teachers get long lectures during their training on the importance of keeping their tempers with their students, so I had said exactly the wrong thing to this woman. I may not have understood that at the time, but I didn't have a bit of trouble realizing that my teacher – who was repeatedly screaming, “I'm not mad at you!” – was nearly out of her mind with rage.

That incident drove home the lesson that what people say often doesn't agree with what they actually do. And that discovery played a big part in the shaping my thinking and behavior.

STONE: Do you try, in your own life, to keep a consistent thread between words and actions, then?

HERBERT: Absolutely. I already told you that family bonds are very important to me, and that we left the country to be able to teach our own children. There were also years – when our youngsters were quite small – that Bev, my wife, was the family's major income earner. She went out to the office and brought in a paycheck, while I stayed home and did the cooking, laundry, and housekeeping, took care of the children, and worked on my writing.

Our children are grown up now, but I still participate in family rituals. In fact, my niece called me last night, and I've got to change a previous appointment and go down to Eugene, Oregon because she's graduating from the university there.

I also feel strongly – and act on my feelings – that individuals should take their own steps to be more self-reliant and to lessen their impact on our environment.

STONE: What have you done to live that belief?

HERBERT: Did you see the solar collector on the side of our house? That's what's heating our home. Now I didn't say to myself that I'd wait until we could get all our heat, all the time, from solar energy, or that putting up a collector would disrupt the beautiful lines on this already constructed house, or that I wouldn't build the heater until we could come up with a way to store the warmth. I simply decided to build an inexpensive collector – the device's sun-catching “tracking rings” are made from recycled beer cans – in order to use solar heat when I can. You see, people keep looking for an absolute final solution, often waiting to use alternative technology until they can build an energy-saving house from scratch, when there are many intermediate steps available to us.

Bev and I also grow all our own vegetables. We live in an area that has what the U.S. Department of Agriculture describes as “poverty soil.” So, when we moved here eight years ago, I paid $200 to have peat hauled in by truck and dumped in the stone terraces out back. Our neighbors laughed at us for spending all that money on peat… but the vegetable crops we grew in those walled beds paid us back that investment in just a year and a half.

I also have an attached greenhouse… I'm slowly but surely thermopaning all the house's windows… I intend to add a solar collector over our swimming pool building to heat its water… and – for a time – I even raised chickens to provide manure for my methane experiments.

In addition, a friend – John Ottenheimer – and I have invented a wind machine. Our device is built on a vertical axis, a feature which allows us to transmit the power quite easily to the ground and keeps the device from being “torqued down” by sudden wind shifts. Our machine can withstand a 100-knot gust, yet can be built out of plastic, wood, or any of a variety of inexpensive materials.

STONE: Are you marketing this windplant?

HERBERT: Not yet, but we intend to. We're still testing and refining the design. We've been working on it for five years.

Another way I try to do my bit for ecology and alternate lifestyles is by bringing “movers and shakers” – men and women like the officers of Weyerhaeuser Tree Company – out here to see our place. I think it's extremely important to reach people who are making decisions

that will affect the lives of us all, and to show them that you don't have to be “a kook living in a tipi” – that image is meant to describe their way of thinking, not my own – to be interested in supplying some of your own energy and food.

So I do try to express my concerns about family, social, and environmental values in my life, as well as in my writing.

STONE: I couldn't agree more that it's important to be consistent in one's actions and words. But when you talk about expressing such values in your writing, you're referring to your later work as a science fiction writer and not to your earlier, purely reportorial work, right?

HERBERT: Oh, you'd be surprised how many of my views I was able to get across in my newspaper days. I was known as a strange rebel who wrote very outspoken stuff. But people would read what I wrote, and that sold newspapers.

I'll give you an example. I was a war correspondent in Vietnam for a while. I became utterly disgusted with our military command there because it was quite obvious, to anyone in the field, that our “leaders” were lying to correspondents and to the American public.

So one of my stories documented the profound corruption, in the Thieu government, that was costing the American taxpayers millions of dollars. In one instance, the military ordered enormous lots of steel to repair our river barges. The steel just happened to turn out to be the wrong gauge for our barges, but – surprise! was exactly right for use on the boats being built at the nearby Thieu family barge factory. And gosh, before long that steel just vanished without

a trace. That chain of events could never have happened unless people in our military were profiting along the way.

I got my facts on this and other instances of corruption, flew off to Copenhagen – in those days, you didn't want to be in Vietnam when you filed a story denigrating the powers that be, for fear that you might fall victim to a war zone “accident” – and sent in a complete story on this conspiracy of lies and greed. It was a “big blast” type of article and was banner headlined in every Sunday edition of the Hearst newspapers all around the country.

It so happens that Bill Hearst, Jr – who does a regular column for the Sunday editions – was also writing about the Vietnam war that day, only he presented a much rosier picture of our war effort than the one I had developed while being there. Yet Bill thought it was a great idea to run our opposing views, together, on the front page, because the resulting controversy sold lots of papers.

STONE: So you were often able to get away with such “brazen” journalism?

HERBERT: Yes, primarily because I could write well – allowing people to understand what I was saying – and I wrote sincerely, presenting my outward bias honestly and then, reporting what I saw.

STONE: How did you become interested in writing science fiction?

HERBERT: I started out doing adventure stories, and actually tried my hand at quite a number of fiction types. Still, science fiction ultimately attracted me. The genre has unlimited elbowroom, which permits me to create any kind of setting I want for whatever story I want to tell. Most important, in science fiction I can work with entertaining and dramatic stories that have analogues to the present situation. That way I can get past people's guard and really talk to the basic human beings within.

STONE: One thing I've noticed in reading and thinking about your books is that every society you describe seems to have glaring faults… no matter how noble the intentions of its creators. For instance, the most positive social system I saw in any of your works was the community described in *The Santaroga Barrier*. [EDITOR'S NOTE: This book portrays an isolated city that does not participate in American consumerist society. Commercial corporations send an agent in to uncover Santaroga's secrets and to attempt to subvert the community.]

At first impression, Santaroga appeared to be far superior to normal American society. The people were cooperative, peaceful, and happy. But by the time I reached the end of the book, I'd become aware of flaws in the community that seriously compromised its virtues.

HERBERT: I wrote The *Santaroga Barrier* with the hope that half the book's readers would end up saying, “Oh boy, what a nifty society. I'd like to live there” and the other half saying, “You wouldn't catch me dead in that place.” The underlying message, then, was that one person's utopia is another person's dystopia or worst possible world – and that any attempt to create a perfect society will fall into the

trap of replenishing itself only from itself, and ignoring those differences between people that give us strength as human beings.

STONE: That's not the kind of one-sided viewpoint a reader might expect to find in the work of an author who professes to “preach” in his fiction. *Soul Catcher*, like *The Santaroga Barrier*, also seemed to be making strong negative statements about American society… only in that book the not entirely positive alternative was native American culture, a society many people think of as being – or, at least, having been – close to perfect. [EDITOR'S NOTE: In *Soul Catcher*, a spiritually powerful Indian kidnaps the son of a prominent politician with the intention of slaying the innocent youth as part of a ceremonial revenge. One important aspect of the ritual is that the victim must agree to the slaying.]

HERBERT: *Soul Catcher* described a collision between two mythologies, those of the native American world and of the European immigrant culture. And, in truth, this very real collision has not yet completed its shaking-down process. Indeed, the two societies still have some grave misunderstandings about each other. Many people, for instance, think that the Indians were the best ecologists this land has ever seen. I don't think that's necessarily true. Some native American cultures were actually quite hard on their environments. They were just slower – because their populations were small – at causing damage than the whites were.

STONE: Really?

HERBERT: Some tribes practiced several forms of massive kill – such as driving buffalo off of cliffs – which were sure to improve the lot of the people doing so at the expense of those who didn't. But since the rate of the environmental change resulting from such acts was too slow to be encompassed by most people's awareness of time, many men and women think that the native American societies could have lived in harmony with their environment forever if they'd just been left alone.

STONE: I must admit I've always believed that to be true. How do you perceive humanity's relationship with the environment today?

HERBERT: I look upon our involvement with the environment – and by the way, all of man's intrusions into the environment are totally natural phenomena – as a continual learning process in which there are no absolutes. Whatever we do causes changes, and we can cause gross disruption to our surroundings as a result of small-order determinations.

STONE: That statement would certainly seem to be supported by the events that occur in your *Dune* novels. [EDITOR'S NOTE: In *Dune*, *Dune Messiah*, and *Children of Dune*, Herbert portrays generations of life and government on a harsh desert planet. The world's native people, the Fremen, are amazingly well adapted to living in a low-moisture environment. In an attempt to improve the lot of the citizens, Dune's aristocratic rulers work to increase the available water an the environment.] The major change people tried to effect on Dune was to bring moisture to the desert. That clearly

seemed a desirable goal.

HERBERT: Yes, *Dune* was so arid that the very idea of water coming down from the skies in rain, and of great rivers flowing over the land, conjured up visions of paradise. But when that one change was made, it had a regular “domino theory” series of consequences that hadn't been anticipated. Indeed, by the time Dune reached the stage described in my fourth desert planet book – *God Emperor of Dune* – the changes had pretty well eliminated individualism!

STONE: Why? Why did you choose to portray the effects of such a seemingly desirable change as being so disastrous?

HERBERT: I felt that the historical interrelationship between the native Fremen and their desert planet had created what amounted to a religion. They had learned not to question the way to behave in their environment, but to act in certain ways on faith. They were locked into their system. So, even when the environment changed, the people didn't change their social mythology, their values, or their ways of relating to one another.

STONE: In other words, they failed to alter their own part of the planet's ecology.

HERBERT: That's right. You see, I think there are such things as

psychological ecology, religious ecology, economic ecology, etc. And none of them can exist in a vacuum. They're all interrelated. So whenever we make decisions and put them into effect, we ought to review and assess all the potential results.

The people I distrust most are those who want to improve our lives but have only one course of action in mind.

STONE: There must be a lot of folks – including many who call themselves environmentalists – who aren't in agreement with your thinking about the relation between humans and ecology.

HERBERT: Yes, there certainly are. Too many ecologically concerned individuals seem to think that simply getting rid of one noxious environmental pollutant – whether that “culprit” be nuclear power, commercial pesticides, or whatever – will solve all our problems.

STONE: I wouldn't think that most science fiction writers share your concerns, either.

HERBERT: The bulk of science fiction authors – and there are some notable exceptions to this rule – are heavily into what I call the technological toy syndrome.

Writers and scientists who believe that technology alone can solve problems have fallen into a common scientific fallacy: the belief that

science can answer any question in absolute terms, that it's possible to reduce phenomena to one explanation that will operate in a vacuum. That's not the way the universe appears to me. And it quite clearly didn't appear that way to Albert Einstein or Werner Heisenberg, either.

STONE: I appreciate the fact that you don't set up one-sided simplistic solutions, but do you have any positive approaches to handling our problems? There weren't – to my knowledge – any truly promising systems, governments, or leaders described in any of your books that I've read.

HERBERT: There is definitely an implicit warning, in a lot of my work, against big government and especially against charismatic leaders. After all, such people – well-intentioned or not – are human beings who will make human mistakes. And what happens when someone is able to make mistakes for 200 million people? The errors get pretty damned BIG!

For that reason, I think that John Kennedy was one of the most dangerous presidents this country ever had. People didn't question him. And whenever citizens are willing to give unreined power to a charismatic leader, such as Kennedy, they tend to end up creating a kind of demigod – a leader who covers up mistakes instead of admitting them – and makes matters worse instead of better. Now Richard Nixon, on the other hand, did us all a favor.

STONE: You feel that Kennedy was dangerous and Nixon was good for the country?

HERBERT: Yes, Nixon taught us one hell of a lesson, and I thank him for it. He made us distrust government leaders. We didn't mistrust Kennedy the way we did Nixon, although we probably had just as good reason to do so. But Nixon's downfall was due to the fact that he wasn't charismatic. He had to be sold just like Wheaties, and people were disappointed when they opened the box.

I think it's vital that men and women learn to mistrust all forms of powerful, centralized authority. Big government tends to create an enormous delay between the signals that come from the people and the response of the leaders. Put it this way: Suppose there were a delay time of five minutes between the moment you turned the steering wheel on your car and the time the front tires reacted. What would happen in such a case?

STONE: I guess I'd have to drive pretty slowly.

HERBERT: V-e-rrrrrrr-y slowly. Governments have the same slow-response effect. And the bigger the government, the more slowly it reacts. So to me, the best government is one that's very responsive to the needs of its people. That is, the least, loosest, and most local government.

STONE: For the past few decades, though, power seems to have been getting more and more concentrated by big business and centralized authority. We've clearly been moving in the opposite

direction from what you'd prefer.

HERBERT: I don't think that has to continue. I feel that as communication systems improve – and with the new computers that are continually being developed, communications are coming on like gangbusters – people won't be so dependent on the often one-sided reporting of the conventional media for their information. Folks will see that we can take control of some social functions now handled by big government – schools, taxation, whatever – and that the "bigger and stronger is always more effective" idea is a phony bill of goods.

So I see an evolutionary movement toward a certain kind of fragmentation, and not just because of improvements in communications.

STONE: What other factors do you think will influence this decentralization?

HERBERT: We've opened up the Pandora's box of violent technology. We're fast approaching a time when one person can make and employ instruments of violence equal to the ones formerly reserved only to massive governments.

Let's face it, our society has a tiger by the tail in technology. We can't let go. We can't all go back to the farm and be self-sufficient. There isn't enough land to do so, for one thing. Furthermore, people's expectations for their lifestyles have been raised, and you don't monkey around with human expectations. So what we need is

a new way of relating to our society and its tools. And it was in an attempt to envision just such a change that, some 15 years ago, I coined the phrase “technopeasantry.”

STONE: How would you define technopeasantry?

HERBERT: It involves drawing support from technology, but doing so imaginatively. We have to ask the question, “What elements of technology should I use and how should I use them?” A peasant knows, you see, when and why to grab a shovel or a hoe. In the same way, we have to think out our own relationship to the complete environment, our own values and technological options, and make decisions consciously.

Too often today people don't examine or question their basic assumptions. Let me give you an example. I once taught a course at the University of Washington that was called *Utopia/Dystopia*. It was billed as an examination of the current state of our country and our myths of the “better life,” only I had trouble getting my students to really investigate their own premises about technology and lifestyle.

So I hit on the idea of taking them out for along weekend hike in the Olympic mountains in the early spring when I knew the weather was going to be cold and rainy. All I told my class was, “We'll be out in the Olympics for two nights. It's going to rain. Bring your gear, food, and paper and pencils for taking notes. I'll meet you at the trail's head.”

Now, I'm a hedonist in the wilderness. I own a good down sleeping bag and a fine one-man tent with a fly, and carry a very light pack stocked with trail food and the like. Naturally, my gear is pretty much

a product of high technology.

Once we all got up to our campsite – at a place called the Flats – I set up my tent, dug a drain trench, stashed some firewood under the canopy for the morning, and helped organize the evening meal. We ate and hit the sack… and then the rain came. Well, I was quite dry and comfortable in my tent, but a lot of my students weren't so well prepared: During the night, I heard voices crying, “My sleeping bag's all wet! ” or “God, it's cold! ” I simply rolled over and went back to sleep.

The next morning, I got up early and built a big fire. The shivering students soon gathered round, we scrounged together something to eat, and afterward I told them to get their note pads. Then I said, “OK, the bomb just dropped and we're all that's left. How much of our former technology do we try to reconstitute?” Well let me tell you, those cold, wet people who had eaten an inadequate breakfast looked at society's technology a good bit more closely than they had when sitting in a comfortable university classroom. Students who'd been saying things like “Oh sure, I could do without all this stuff” began to ask some basic questions, and to comprehend that technology isn't bad in and of itself. Everything depends on how we use it.

STONE: You're saying, then, that technopeasantry involves people's questioning their basic assumptions so they can make intelligent decisions about how to use technology?

HERBERT: Well, that's not all there is to it. There're other aspects to questioning how we use technology. For instance, most people today live in a “light switch” society where they have no actual

connection to the tools they use. If the light goes off, they have to call the building superintendent to come repair it. Knowledge has become institutionalized into specialties, and individuals have continually less and less power over their lives.

We need to use technology differently so that people can understand their tools… and so they can be put back in touch with the natural world. In fact, one of the things our society needs desperately is a way for people to touch the earth personally and gain the restorative strength that comes with weeding or shoveling, from really getting their hands dirty. We need ways that men and women can see the direct results of their efforts.

STONE: Would it be correct to say that technopeasantry can help develop a sense of self-worth in the individual?

HERBERT: Yes, but there's more to it, yet. We have to learn to recognize that we're always going to make some mistakes, and – knowing that – we shouldn't tie our careers and self-esteem to decisions that could later prove to be the wrong ones. People must be able to say freely, “Hey, that turned out not to be such a good idea. I'd better not do that anymore.”

STONE: The more you describe this concept, the more it encompasses! You're proposing that people learn to consciously judge what tools they use… to employ technologies that they control and not those that control there… and to evaluate and reevaluate all the ramifications of using each specific technology. Frankly, the thought that humans may someday be able to make so many

carefully thought – out value decisions has the ring of an idealistic dream.

HERBERT: Well, it's not going to happen overnight… unless we have a cataclysmic disaster-like some very traumatic natural phenomenon or an enormously destructive atomic war – which requires that we take such new directions in order to survive.

STONE: Assuming that we won't be forced into new behavior patterns by a catastrophe, how do you envision the change taking place?

HERBERT: As a result of social evolution. When individuals start making technopeasant choices – such as converting an inner city attic into a greenhouse – and demonstrating that doing so can be both personally rewarding and quite effective, more and more people will be drawn to such actions.

STONE: So you see the individual drive to achieve self-sufficiency as a catalyst of the movement toward what you call technopeasantry?

HERBERT: Hold on there! Yes, individuals will lead the way to a technopeasant society, but I've never said that people should strive for absolute self-reliance. I think relative freedom from dependency

ought to be our goal. We all, of course, must be wary of systems – such as the whole ripcord welfare state – that systematize increasing dependence, but we must also remember a basic truth about human beings: We are interdependent. I myself am not attempting to live on a completely self-sufficient farm. I never have. Isolation is not part of my basic philosophy. The point is that we don't necessarily have to be dependent in some of the ways that we've chosen to be. I do, though, believe that a person's ties should be strongest to his or her local community, with looser bonds connecting him or her to larger communities.

In fact, there isn't a doubt in my mind that the average North American's life would improve if our society became more community based. If, say, cities like Seattle or little Port Townsend here developed symbiotic relationships with the surrounding farmland, so that – for example – the effluent of an urban community could become a tool for keeping the land around the city fertile. Such an interlocked region would be able to establish a self-sustaining cycle and not have to waste energy trucking fertilizers and food over long distances.

STONE: And do you see increased local autonomy as an inevitable part of our future?

HERBERT: Small areas are definitely going to have to become more independent. Look at energy, for instance. There's a growing shift to alternative fuels, and there's no way in the world the OPEC nations can stop it. Now the most attractive of the new power sources that I see on the horizon is hydrogen. Hydrogen burns cleanly – the by-

product of its combustion is water – and has about a six-to-one energy-to-weight advantage compared to the best conventional jet fuel. In addition, we already have the technology to make hydrogen, in a hydride form, safer to handle than gasoline.

STONE: Where would we get the energy to produce hydrogen fuel?

HERBERT: We have wind, the tides, the temperature differential in the ocean… there's an enormous amount of untapped energy. And the real importance of such diversified power resources will be the fact that communities will be able to make their own fuel.

Now you must recognize that any change which makes small areas more independent will have both good and bad aspects. After all, there is something to be said for the glue that holds us together as a society.

STONE: Wait a minute! You've spent a good bit of our time here damning big government and praising independence. Just what value do you see in large, centralized societies?

HERBERT: Remember that we are interdependent. So if you change the situation that has provided the glue of social interdependence, you must institute alternate adhesive forces to hold us together. Look at it this way: It's very possible that, within the next 15 years, a little community like Port Townsend could be in a position to threaten the federal government.

STONE: How could a small group back up such a threat? With atomics?

HERBERT: Pshaw! There are weapons much more dangerous than nuclear devices. Things like contagious diseases that can't be cured, or substances that can be slipped into food and water supply chains in order to sterilize large populations.

And the often-touted concept of world government could in no way handle such terrorism, because that particular dream suffers from what must be one of the few immovable laws of the universe: the basic truth that the more you try to control, the more there is that needs to be controlled.

STONE: So how can humanity deal with threats posed by small but powerful groups?

HERBERT: We're going to have to make very tough evaluations of how we instill morality into our young, and how we help people come to believe that all humans are similar creatures and that the world will be better off if everyone does try to live by something like the Golden Rule. And we'll probably discover – possibly only after suffering a certain amount of pain – that the only way to spread such values is, naturally, on the community and individual levels.

Ultimately, I think the individual will become increasingly important in

this world. I think the collective society is on its way out. But, in relation to all my statements, you must remember that I'm talking about the kind of individual who has been raised to weigh the consequences of his or her actions, not simply for him- or herself, but for others as well. If we don't manage to produce such thinking moral citizens, we're likely going to go down the tube.

STONE: But you feel pretty sure humankind will be able to make the necessary changes?

HERBERT: I think they'll be forced on us. Oh, we'll make some mistakes. We'll probably have a number of fanatic leaders and such to deal with in the years to come. I don't see the future as being all sweetness and light, by any means. Learning from mistakes is a very slow process. It may take us 20,000 or 25,000 years to get to where, I feel, we have to go.

STONE: Still, you think humanity will survive… and improve itself in the process.

HERBERT: Yes, and I also think that, in the far future, human beings will have scattered – in separate societies – to numerous faraway planets. Don't forget, though, when you hear me say these things, that prediction is a form of false mythology.

Why, even the idea that there's such a thing as the future is a bunch of semantic nonsense because there'll always be changes and new

events that no one can foresee.

STONE: So I should take all your projections of what will happen to humanity with a few grains of salt.

HERBERT: Of course.

STONE: You know, Mr. Herbert, it figures that you'd give me a prediction and then tell me not to believe it. Throughout this interview it's been all but impossible to pin you down to “neatly packaged” ideas. In fact, your concept of technopeasantry seems, in essence, to call for people to adopt a questioning state of mind that deliberately avoids set solutions. I can imagine that many men and women who read your books or hear your ideas would prefer to be given a clear and uncomplicated plan they could respond to.

HERBERT: Very likely, Monsieur Stone. But I don't believe in simple answers.

The Environmentalist, 1981

Profile of Frank Herbert, by John Elkington, The Environmentalist, 09/1981

The meeting on which this profile is based, between Frank Herbert, one of science fiction's grand masters, and John Elkington, Managing Director of Environmental Data Services, Ltd., took place in Knightsbridge, London, England, in the early hours of 5 July 1981.

The *Dune* trilogy, which established Frank Herbert as one of the world's best known science fiction authors, is unusual for the genre in that ecology occupies centre stage. Indeed *Dune*, which was first published in 1965, was dedicated to “the people whose labors go beyond ideas into the realm of ‘real materials’ – to the dry-land ecologists, wherever they may be, in whatever time they work”. The trilogy, which also includes *Dune Messiah* (1971) and *Children of Dune* (1976), was extended in June 1980 by the publication of *God Emperor of Dune*, set 3,000 years after the events recorded in *Dune* and its sequels.

Raised during the Depression on a small subsistence farm in Katsap County, Washington State, Frank Herbert later turned his hand to journalism, acquiring the skills which he now deploys to such effect in his science fiction and other writing. Classifying himself as a “techno-peasant”, he lives with his family on the Olympic peninsula

in Washington State, in America's heavily forested North West. Here he has turned what the U.S. Department of Agriculture calls “poverty soils” into productive earth, installing renewable energy devices of his own design atop and around his home.

In *Dune* and its sequels, Herbert portrays an arid, religion-soaked desert planet: Dune. He traces the generations of people and government, focusing on the Fremen, the indigenous people who are exquisitely attuned to their harsh environment. A central theme is the plan of the incoming, aristocratic Atreides family to reclaim the desert and bring water to its people.

“I look upon our involvement with the environment – and, by the way, *all* of man's intrusions into the environment are totally *natural* phenomena – as a continual learning process”, Herbert comments. But, he notes, “Whatever we do causes change, and we can cause gross disruptions to our surroundings as a result of small-order determinations." Indeed, by the time the reader spans the 3,000 years to *God Emperor of Dune*, that original decision to introduce water to Dune has all but wiped out the individualism of the planet's inhabitants.

Unlike most science fiction authors, Herbert is not an addict of technology for its own sake. Indeed, he suggests, “our society has a tiger by the tail in technology”. But, instead of dismissing technology out of hand, as did many of his most avid readers in the 1960s and 1970s, he argues that we must humanise technology, that an understanding of ecology can help us develop new tools which are environmentally benign.

John Elkington talked with Frank Herbert the day after he returned from five weeks in the United States as a 1981 Churchill Fellow. During this period, he visited a wide range of individuals, companies and other organisations involved in environmental research and

protection, energy developments and new technologies. With a book on solar energy to complete for Penguin by February 1982, he is also in the early stages of a book on the various ways in which what he calls the “environmental gospels” have been communicated both to the faithful and to the infidel.

Fiction is an important communication channel and one which Frank Herbert has consciously exploited to get a particular environmental message across. *The educational power of fiction is often overlooked*, simply because it is entertaining, but that very characteristic compounds its impact.

Different critics have different views as to what exactly constitutes environmental fiction – or "eco-fiction", as Gabriel Navarre dubs it in “Toward a Definition of Environmental Fiction” (pp. 217-222 in *Earthworks: Ten Years on the Environmental Front*, edited by Mary Lou Van Deventer and published by Friends of the Earth, San Francisco, 1980).

Gabriel Navarre proceeds to distinguish between “true” and “false” eco-fiction. In the first category he puts people (by no means all of them have written fiction as we understand it) such as Dante, James Joyce, Gerard O'Neill (author of *The High Frontier* and, more recently, of *2081*, both exploring the prospects for space colonisation), John Todd (of the New Alchemy Institute), Amory Lovins (one of the nuclear industry's most effective opponents), Paolo Soleri (who put architecture and ecology together and came up with 'Arcology') and Buckminster Fuller who, among other things, invented the geodesic dome.

The writers of “false” eco-fiction include Herman Melville (*Moby Dick* was incidental to the theme of man against the universe), Barry Commoner (who equated pollution with capitalism), John Muir (who was, Navarre argues, too sanctimonious) and those responsible for

films such as *Earthquake* or *Save the Whale*, where ecology is simply used as background colour for a standard commercial thriller.

Dune, surprisingly, is lumped into a middle ground, somewhere between “true” and “false” eco-fiction, along with J. R. R. Tolkien's “Lord of the Rings”. Having visited Paolo Soleri's Arcosanti in the Arizona desert during the energy crisis of 1973 ('A Flight from Flatness', *Architectural Association Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1974, pp. 59-64); having interviewed Buckminster Fuller in Iceland during 1977 ('The Reykjavik Imperative', *New Scientist*, 23 June 1977, pp. 700-702); and having read Dante, Joyce, Lovins ('Soft Energy Paths') and O'Neill, John Elkington would put Frank Herbert firmly in the true eco-fiction camp.

JE: I first came across *Dune* when I was doing a sociology of religion seminar in the late sixties. It was prescribed reading – and certainly the most absorbing book that course had to offer. I found *Dune Messiah* somewhat less compelling, perhaps because it was a bridging volume.

FH: The interesting thing is that the three books, including *Children of Dune* which came third, were conceived as one book. They turned into three because I had ideas as I went along. But *Dune Messiah* followed pretty much the pattern I had in mind originally as a kind of Janus book, looking forward and back, changing history. And I think that was upsetting to people because I had set out in *Dune* to create a very charismatic leader, whom one could admire, for all the good reasons. I wanted this leader to take control, have all this power and follow through the implications.

JE: Where did the idea, the basic seed of the *Dune* story, come from? Particularly the ecological framework within which the story is set.

FH: You know the expression, “it growed like Topsy?”

JE: Yes, but there must have been a seed crystal around which it grew.

FH: Yes, there was. I wanted to do a book about the messianic impulse in human society, looking at why we follow the leader. Because, in my view, taking what I think is a dispassionate look at charismatic leaders, they ought to come with a warning on the package that they're dangerous to your health.

In the very simplest terms, if I make a mistake, I make it for myself, and perhaps for a small circle of intimates. If I'm a charismatic leader, I make it for millions and the amplification of these mistakes can be pretty painful. I think one of the most dangerous leaders the United States has had in recent times was John Kennedy, not because the man was evil but because people didn't question him.

JE: And he did make mistakes.

FH: Oh yes. He was the one who got us into Vietnam. And my hero is Richard Nixon, because he taught us to mistrust government.

JE: So he did. But how did you turn the general principle of charismatic leadership into fiction, how did you set about it?

FH: Well, I started nosing into every speciality I could discover – and into some which didn't even exist then. Comparative religion, the psychology of social movements, anthropology… I went everywhere and anywhere to track down material for it. While I was doing this, I went down to Florence, Oregon, to do a magazine article about the U.S. Department of Agriculture project there's, where they were stabilising the sand dunes.

JE: That's a coincidence. I went through there just a week ago, down to Dune City. The dune systems there are certainly impressive, in fact, they still seem to be on the move. But they're beautiful.

FH: Aren't they lovely? And the USDA project there is world famous in its field; people come from all over the world to learn how we did it.

JE: And that involved stabilising the dunes?

FH: They were walking across towns and coveting roads, houses, trees.

JE: You can still see that, can't you? We saw the dead trees, which stood in the middle of dunes and looked as though they'd been enveloped.

FH: They had, and the USDA came up with a technique there, based on planting with poverty grasses and stuff, to stabilise the dunes. And I never did write that article, because in the process of researching it I realised I had the perfect setting. So, given the proclivities of science fiction, given that you can create any type of environment for the purposes of your story, I just set out to it.

JE: Did you write and rewrite *Dune*, because it started straight in with a totally coherent and consistent picture of the planet Dune, and of the social, political and historical dimensions of its development?

FH: I used the technique of enormous detail, which I had prepared beforehand, but selectively. It's all consistent, you see, it's the sense of the interlinking which creates the reality. The hidden interlinking has to be there in reality for the writer. You have to have done your homework.

JE: Where did you get your training in writing?

FH: Oh, I decided quite young that I was going to write. I told my parents when I was eight that I was going to be “a author”. I supported my writing habit by being a journalist for many years. My wife helped support us for a while, working in advertising.

JE: A familiar pattern.

FH: I was a househusband, stayed home and did the cooking and the housework, looked after the children and did the writing. And Bev went out and commuted to work and took care of the nitty gritty of keeping us from starving to death.

JE: An important role. So when you were doing journalism, were you covering environmental themes?

FH: Everything. I was a general assignment reporter, an editor, a photographer, on the West coast. I was finally assistant news editor of the *San Francisco Examiner* and found that if I was going to be a good assistant news editor, I couldn't do any more writing. It's the Peter Principle, you get pushed into a position which you can't handle or which you don't want. I think I had the good sense to see that I didn't want it. I knew I could handle it, I did all right with it, but it

just was not my cup of tea.

So I went into the managing editor and told him I was quitting. He was a very nice guy. He said, “You’ll be sitting in this chair in a few years.” I said, “Ed, I love you like a brother, but I don't want your job.” And he said, “Well, what do you want?” I said, “I want to write.” And he said, “Well, how would you like a position on the magazine?” So they put me on the magazine. It was a lovely fur-lined cocoon, because I assigned myself. I had to be in the office two days a week, one day for the photographic side of things and another for the makeup.

JE: While in Washington recently, I picked up and read *Soul Catcher*. It's not a science fiction book, it's rooted in the culture of the Indians of the North West, but it has a strong environmental flavour. How did you come to write that?

FH: Well, I grew up with Indians and I considered myself *the* definitive Caucasian expert on the North West coast Indians. I did a book which I thought was it, and I was teaching at the University of Washington where I was also helping on a thing called the “Plunge”. This was a crash course for freshmen, involving a long weekend designed to teach them about being at an institution of higher education, teaching them what it's all about.

The way it was done was that we would be staff one weekend, and then we would be with the students the next, so that whatever was done to the students was done to us. And one of the weekends when I was with the students, we had an Indian with us, down from Alaska. We played psychological games. He played one which made us all very angry with the staff. He said the money, very small

amounts we contributed for the game, had been taken by the staff and they went out and bought candy and beer with it.

This just happens to you once, it happens to Indians every day of their lives. I realised that for just a few minutes there I had been totally outraged with these people, saying, “What the devil were they doing?” And I had a sudden flash of this book I had done – and it was utter drivel.

It was awful. I went home, and burned it. I destroyed the notes, everything. And then I went back and redid it. And that's the *Soul Catcher* you see.

It's a collision between the mythology of the coastal Indians and the Graeco-Roman mythology which we imported. When the two incompatible systems come together at their worst, it's just like Northern Ireland at the moment.

JE: To return to the *Dune* sagas, are you working on further sequels?

FH: I'm not working on a sequel. I thought I'd finished with *Children of Dune*, but I had a character in there who wouldn't let go of me, he wouldn't just leave. I kept thinking of him. What would it be like to have a civilisation under one person for thousands of years?

JE: I must say that in reading *Children of Dune*, the beginning of the transformation of Leto II from a human being into a composite of man and sandworm kept me thinking, this is fantasy. Yet when I

began God Emperor of Dune, the reality was back and I was wrapped up in the world of Dune all over again. Maybe part of it is that by the time you get to this latest book, you've either accepted the transformation or you're probably not reading the book at all.

FH: Yes, it's either happening or it isn't. You see the origins of the sandworm were right out of Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. It occurred to me that the monster has always been as man's dark side, the unconscious and so on. It also occurred to me that we had never, in any literature that I could find, put the two together. Put the mindless monster together with the human being, wearing the same flesh.

JE: Another of your books with elements of the same theme in it was *The Green Brain*, in which colonies of insects took the form of human beings in their attempts to put a brake on man's use of insecticides. Where did that idea come from?

FH: Well, science fiction, in my opinion, had never created a really believable bug-eyed monster, the giant insect; because, in terms of physics, it's impossible. An ant which is as big as this room here wouldn't work, it would drown. So I cast around in my mind, thinking how could one do it. And, of course, the answer was there. The hive as symbiote. So I started with that and began building a story round it, studying the conditions which had led up to it. All writers play God, of course, but in science fiction you don't have to rest on the seventh day. You can create any sort of environment or universe for the purposes of your story.

JE: What about the selective pressure exerted by pesticides?

FH: Yes, that was part of it. It was obvious, even then, that pesticides were creating new insects, so I wanted to deal with that, although I didn't want to make it the only dominant feature of the story.

JE: Do you see the ecological dimension of your work as simply one component among many, or do you find it more interesting than the general run of background colour?

FH: I have a particular interest in it, starting back in the late forties. My concern is multi-pronged. Ecology is a very attractive platform for demagogues. It is also a complex subject, very complex. One of our problems in dealing with ecology, as in dealing with a lot of things, is that careers tend to be tied to decisions. What we ought to be able to do is to change direction, even dramatically, quickly, without attaching stigma to the people who made the decisions which we are now changing.

I've had myself in trouble, for example, with the Sierra Club. I was a pilot, over the redwood area, so I saw what happened when the Sierra Club moved into Sacramento and decided that it was going to lock up all the redwoods. Suddenly, it was like matchsticks falling. Barren hills, and I mean within a month. The timber companies decided that they had to cut immediately if they were to cut at all.

In my estimation, the Sierra Club was instrumental in creating serious over-cutting and siltation. It's a blindness on the part of certain environmentalists.

JE: And one that may actually be getting worse, if my reading of developments in the States at the moment is anywhere near the mark.

FH: Yes.

JE: I talked to a large number of environmental lobbyists and other organisations, and was struck by the complete lack of interest shown by some environmentalists in what industry is trying to do – and in how it might more sensibly set about doing it, in such a way as to minimise the environmental impacts of activities which are vitally important, whether they be agricultural forestry-related or in the manufacturing field.

FH: I was interviewed on the radio the other day, and the interviewer said, “You’re an ecologist, Mr. Herbert”, and equated the term with preservationist. I called him on that and said that ecology doesn't deal with the kind of preservation you're talking about. Ecology teaches us how to understand the consequences of what we do. And perhaps that could even lead us to strip-mining, if that were found to be preferable to some other way of extracting a mineral. One of the problems in the US is that we're still block-cutting in forestry, where we should be contour- and strip-cutting. Here's an

example of ecology working in the opposite direction.

JE: I talked to Weyerhauser a couple of weeks ago, and they are still wedded to clear-cutting and likely to remain so.

FH: Yes, I know. They say it's cheaper. I've done seminars for them and I think they're open, wanting to hear your arguments. How far up those arguments go in the executive hierarchy, I don't know. But the nature of the basic resource, of the timber, has not really been looked into properly. They haven't looked at the long-term, the really long-term necessities. And the cost factors spread out over that longer period.

I got into the office once of the executive vice-president of ITT and, in the course of our conversation, I asked him if the company did long-term planning. He said, “Of course.” “How long?” I asked. He said, “One year…” This was about five years ago. He said, “We have a one-year plan and we re-do it every year.” “So”, I said, “What do you do when your plan goes awry?” He said, “What you do is you put together a hasty patch, you fix it. Then you revise your plan for the next year.” I said, “that’s costly.” He said, “We can pass it along.” He thought it was the right thing to do. He was saying this is what we do because it's best.

JE: Have you enjoyed your dealing with industry?

FH: There have been enjoyable moments. There are all sorts of

mythologies about environmentalists, about ecologists, and it amuses me to blow the myths out of the water. I'm really asking people: I say, look, convince me that your way is better, let's see you do it.

JE: Have you been keeping an eye on developments in Washington, D.C. under the new adminstration?

FH: Oh yes! It's a real backlash.

JE: I visited the Council on Environmental Quality's offices, just across from the White House, and it was a ghost town. President Reagen had asked the CEQ's director, a staunch Republican, to fire 58 of his 59 staff – himself included. And, while I was in Colorado, I spent a couple of days at the Solar Energy Research Institute, talking to many of the scientists there and lunching with SERI's director, Denis Hayes. And a week after I left, Denis was sacked, along with 370 or so of his staff. You seem to build things up faster in the States, but you're pretty good at stripping them right back down again.

FH: I was warning about this backlash quite a while back. You have to adjust your ecological concerns to the long-term needs of capital investment. I am a capitalist. I personally am a capitalist, but for a very strange reason. I believe that capitalism tends to go down with its mistakes. Managed economies have two things against them. Number one, they need a large managerial bureaucracy. Managerial

bureaucracies of that type inevitably become autocratic aristocracies. You see it happening in the Soviet Union, very dramatically. The Marxist dialectic as it is operating there is ensuring repetition.

The second thing is that the capitalist system breaks down, and you have to patch and repair it. In that sense, I'm with the ITT man, I just don't think he's planning far enough ahead. If you patch your mistakes, you're learning as you go and you're adapting. If you're managing and fixing, you're locking down today, you're not getting into tomorrow. You're preventing tomorrow. You're preventing the change.

My argument to people who are fearful of the Soviet Union is to tell them, don't worry, they're staying in the ninteenth century!

JE: You have touched on this question of whether ecologists can graft their activities, their perception, onto the capitalist system. Have you come across anyone doing that in the States? Having talked to a very wide range of people there, I can't say I found that many.

FH: That's what I'm doing. My belief is that we have to learn more from our mistakes than from our successes. Our successes will take care of themselves. In fact, some types of success are dangerous, since they lead us to believe that we actually know what we are doing. And then the surprise comes. Then the change comes. The new invention.

JE: How do you keep abreast of ecology and of the other sciences you draw upon in your work?

FH: I subscribe and read. I don't read much fiction, you have to make a hard decision, what are they doing, not what do they think they are doing. And you can oftentimes read what they are doing not from what is printed about it, but from the consequences of their actions. It's a kind of social analysis, you're psychoanalysing the movement of the society by asking: what are the logical consequences of that set of actions? Where will that deposit us?

My concern is that we're separating ecological issues, I don't think you can make an easy distinction between a society and its environment, between mind and body. But we seem to think we can separate economic ecology from political, ecology from social ecology, whereas what I like to do is put it all together in its living package.

My view of the environmental concerns in the States – and I think the pattern is probably repeated here in Europe – is that the back-to-the land, self-sufficiency movement has taken over the mythology of the South Seas island, where the brown-haired maiden drops coconuts in your mouth, in the daytime.

I used to take my class out, trying to get this across. It isn't tools that are at fault, it's how we use them. So I used to take them on a two-night camping trip, in early spring when it might rain or it might even snow. And I would tell them that they'd be gone two nights, they'd be cold, they'd probably be wet, so bring enough food so that we can have a big meal the first night, a communal meal. I'd bring a big pot. Plan on staying dry and warm and bring a small notebook and a pencil.

So here they would come. I swear to you, on one of these enterprises a young woman showed up in a fur coat and carrying a suitcase. It was a five-mile hike, up the mountains. We made a rope arrangement for her, so she could carry it on her back. We got into the mountains, that time, and it was typical of most of the times I did this. I have a one-man tent, with a good sleeping-bag. So I set it up on high ground, back from the river, all by myself, because I knew there would be screams of outrage in the night and I didn't want to be bothered by them. I stacked up some dry wood for the morning fire and went to bed.

All through the night, there would be cries of, “there’s water all over my pack”, and so on, and I would just roll over and go back to sleep. And then the morning dawned and the first birds started and I went out and built a big fire, putting lots of coffee on. Everyone came shivering, standing around the fire, steaming. After everyone had been fed and had dried out, I said: ”The Bomb just went off, and we're the only survivors.”

Our problems is, how much of the technology do we reconstitute? Here they are, they have nylon windbreakers and steel handaxes, all of this technologically based equipment. And suddenly they're cold and wet and they have a new view of it. Perhaps they learned something?

Science Fiction – A Review of Speculative Literature, 1981

BY Terry Dowling, Keith Curtis and Joseph Nicolas with Rob McGough and Helen Swift, A Review of Speculative LITERATURE, 09/1981

On 6th and 7th June 1981, Oberoi Hotel, Adelaide; Advention ’81

SF: A general question to begin: what's your view of the purpose of science fiction?

HERBERT: Well, to entertain. To ask the questions that aren't being asked any where else. I think it has a scientific function in asking the hard questions. We'll ask those questions that aren't being asked elsewhere. They're fair game for us. What if ecology breaks down? What if this kind of a society develops? Or what if we get a particularly obtrusive police state – the *Nineteen Eighty-Four* thing? None of these stories, I believe, prevents those evolutionary or devolutionary processes, but they sure as hell alert us to what's happening. Whole terms have come into the language now – Big Brother, and so on.

SF: It was your use of the word “ecology” in novels as different as *Dune* and *The Dragon in the Sea* that made me look up its full meaning as that: “Branch of biology dealing with living organisms’ habits, modes of life, and relations to their surroundings.”

HERBERT: Have you ever thought of this room as a natural setting?

SF: You made me do so when Captain Sparrow talked about the inside of the *Fenian Ram* as an “enveloped world with its own special ecology”, and Leto II referred to his future dynasty as “an ecosystem in miniature.” I'd never thought about it like that before. I hadn't realized that people interacting in any closed environment.

HERBERT: Not just closed environment; in any environment! We live in a technological world and there's a feedback system going on. We are inventing things, making things, and they are having an influence on us and our societies. You can break it down. We have political ecology, social ecology, religious ecology, you just go right on. The systems have their interacting feedbacks.

SF: You have a recurring theme of survival, of humanity being tested and put under stress and forced to confront what is basic to it, forced even to consider the fact that it's in a crisis situation all the time – a fact so often overlooked.

HERBERT: Yes, well we really are, all the time. Maybe not under as much stress sometimes as at other times, but all the time. I can give you a few instances. I don't know whether it's the same in Australia as in the U.S.

I suspect it is – but when you get into your automobile in the U.S. and start driving, your blood pressure goes up dramatically. Detroit spent quite a bit of money discovering that if you got in your car, turned on the ignition to start the motor, and eight seconds later the motor's not running, your blood pressure goes right up. You have eight seconds. Now I'm sure that's a conditioned reaction; the technological toy has conditioned us. Because I know damn well that if my grandfather didn't get the harness on the horse in eight seconds, his blood pressure didn't go up. Maybe if he didn't have the horse harnessed in five minutes and the horse was spirited and skittish, his blood pressure probably went up then. But it's a different feedback system.

SF: In *Children of Dune*, Leto II refers to the various mystiques behind any civilization which act as barriers against change: “the religious mystique, the hero-leader mystique, the messiah mystique, the mystique of science/technology, and the mystique of nature itself.” These things are seen as

barriers, while a lot of cultures would actively support the idea that they are a part and parcel of a normal healthy growth. Do you see these things as limitations?

HERBERT: No. I see that some societies look at them as limitations, especially Western cultures. Another thing happens, too. If you think

you know, it tends to prevent you from asking questions. And the mystique of thinking you know, of course, is all bound up in other things – the guilt of ignorance, “I don't want to look stupid” (Laughter)…

SF: You make a great case for survival all the time. You come across as a true optimist.

HERBERT: Oh, yes. I would like to believe that there will be human beings millions of years from now, enjoying life the way we enjoy it or to the extent that they're capable of enjoying it then. Alive and enjoying it, you see.

SF: Given this optimism, does the present political situation hold any fears or terrors for you at all?

HERBERT: Of course. The speech this afternoon about the arms race – that situation worries me. I think that the speaker did not bring in all the peripheral factors that he should be bringing in. He has limited it. He made a very narrow approach to the atomic threat – that particular aspect of an arms race and how it controls what's built. But he doesn't talk at all about the obvious stupidity of building enormous naval vessels at a time such as this. And the very fact that these are built cannot be passed over as the admirals' preparing to fight the next war on the basis of the last one, it really cannot be passed over that way. It really focuses your attention on the fact that the arms race is an economic thing.

SF: The building of battleships provides employment…

HERBERT: That's right. And it provides jobs for admirals and captains and commanders, you see .(Laughter)

SF: It is interesting to note that *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, edited by Peter Nicholls, says there has been "remarkably little critical analysis" of your work. Why do you think that might be?

HERBERT: I haven't any idea.

SF: Considering the very real impact your work has made on the genre, does it disappoint you that you haven't been discussed more?

HERBERT: Not at all. I kind of have a leaning towards keeping science fiction in the gutter where it belongs. (Laughter) It's an emotional leaning. I think we have a lot of fun with it, you see. In addition to having fun, I think I'm prodding the guy next to me and saying: "Hey, the king's naked!" (Laughter)

SF: You feel the academic tendency in recent years tends to kill it?

HERBERT: The academic tendency is to analyse the life out of it. And analysing the fun out of it, too: I want a report on Thursday… (Laughter)

SF: Your work is very well known, is generally accepted and cherished. People find that they can relate to your books very much. Your novel *Dune* makes a great first book for novice readers of science fiction. And yet, especially considering the nature of the academic trend, there has been this lack of critical attention from even those who normally are first to play the game of analysis.

HERBERT: Oh, yeah, Will McNelly has done it. But Will is a heretic anyway. (Laughter) The fact that it doesn't happen doesn't bother me, really doesn't bother me. There are some among my contemporaries who are bothered by that in their own work and are also bothered by the failure of the establishment literati to give them the status they feel they deserve. I think this was Kurt Vonnegut's problem. I know damn well it was Bob Silverberg's problem because he said so. My own approach to this is that it's a waste of energy to bother with that. Do your thing. And as long as you are enjoying it, do it!

SF: (Going on from that) you're obviously writing the books you enjoy. When you actually sit down to write, do you write a book more for yourself than for the audience, or do you write for a particular

group of readers?

HERBERT: I have a kind of amorphous sense of an audience out there and I really care about that audience, I really do. I want them to be entertained. I want to give them the frosting on the cake. I want all these good experiences to come out in it. I sort of see myself as the jongleur who comes into the castle to sing for his supper, telling about the other castle down the highway. And, my God, people pay me for it. What a marvelous thing!

SF: How do you feel about doing humorous material? *Whipping Star* was an immensely enjoyable book at the humorous level.

HERBERT: I had a lot of fun doing that. If I can get it in, I do it. But you've got to be careful with humor because it can become too ham-handed and it will destroy that sense of involvement in the story. And that's really a primary concern. You want the people to be entertained, to be involved in the story. You want them in the page just as a good movie maker wants people in that screen.

SF: Which books would you be most satisfied with? Your personal favourites?

HERBERT: I'm delighted with some books which are sixth ball in the side pocket type of things. One of them is *Soul Catcher*. Another

one is *The Santaroga Barrier*. I wanted to do a particular kind of book there. I was infatuated with the idea of the utopia-dystopia dichotomy. One man's utopia is another's dystopia, you see. And I'd set out to write a book that would split the readership just about in half. About half of them would think I was writing about a utopia; and about half would think I was writing about dystopia. And it was *the Lady or the Tiger*. I was really doing it deliberately, sort of snickering to myself as I did it. But I really designed that book to do that, and just about half of my fan mail says: “Oh boy, I'd love to live there”, and about half of it says: “Good God, what an awful place!” Fine. That's exactly what I set out to do, you see. It's very satisfying to design a book that way, to really set out to do that kind of story then have it do that.

SF: Do you ever find that you lose control and that the novel writes itself?

HERBERT: Oh, all the novels write themselves to some degree. That's marvelous, when the characters take over. But the design, the outline, the pattern of the book, to do a particular thing, that's something else.

SF: Are there books of yours you'd actually like to go back and rewrite?

HERBERT: Some of them are not as well written as others. But it's like yesterday's news. You feel you've grown beyond that and you

know you'd be able to do a better job now. But there are so many new ideas coming on that you'd like to deal with, that the ones behind you stand on their own. I give any book I'm working on one hundred per cent. I'm in that world when I'm writing it, and I would hope that the one hundred per cent would change as the years go on, that you have more of a one hundred per cent to give the next time.

SF: How did this one hundred per cent apply with the collaboration you did with Bill Ransom on *The Jesus Incident*?

HERBERT: An eerie experience! The way that happened was that Bill came to me and he wanted me to do a sequel to *Destination: Void*. He had ideas about it. He said: You could do this and you could do that and you could do this other thing. And I was very heavily pressed with deadlines at the moment and I didn't have time to do it. I was talking to Bill about it – he's a very close friend – and I suddenly said: “Hey, would you like to collaborate with me on doing a sequel?”. And Bill said: “God, I don't know. I don't know if we could work together”. And I said: “I don't know either. But we could try it.” So we kind of outlined a story, and that was fun, and before we knew it we were working together. It worked well. And I got in touch with my agent and talked to New York. They were a little queasy about it, about Bill Ransom. And there were other considerations. I insisted that there be equal play on the names and that the contract be an equal split, because you don't write a collaboration and have one person be a second-class citizen. So we finally got our contract and everything was fine, and we started writing the story. We were leap-frogging. Bill would do one chapter and I'd do the other. I did the first chapter and Bill did the second, and so on. Then we came

back and re-wrote each other to add uniformity of style, and even Bev has trouble really seeing which passages I wrote and which passages Bill wrote.

BEV: Yes, I can't tell.

HERBERT: But the spooky thing was that we began getting into each other's heads. In one instance, each of us introduced a character in succeeding chapters. Bill had the first chapter with this character in it and I had the second one. We named this character, gave her the same name, and these two chapters just dovetailed. That character just went right on, and we had no previous collaboration, no consultation on naming the character or the sequence. Bill just came on a situation where we needed another character and he put that other character in, named her, and I used the same name and had that character in the next chapter. We came back at the end of the week on our regular Friday consultation and looked at that and both of us got spooked. (Laughter) And it happened not just once but several times. There were other coincidences that happened this way all through the book. It was as though we were on some kind of a wavelength. Bev kept commenting on it.

BEV: It was eerie, yes.

HERBERT: It was really eerie! We finished the book, mailed it off to New York, everybody's happy, and then Bill and I each broke a little

finger. (Laughter) It was spooky. We're going to do another one this winter, a sequel to *The Jesus Incident*. This one we'll do a little bit differently because I've got another book to finish when I get back and I won't get at what Bill has done until this winter. We plotted the story together, but Bill is taking off on his own and doing any number of things according to the outline and the plot that we developed. He's not completing the book and he won't have it all fleshed out. But he'll have some sketchy outlines and some sample chapters, and I'll get it probably in November sometime and do my bit.

SF: Your ideas and his must dovetail, too.

HERBERT: We work well together. We enjoy the same things. In fact, Bev complains and says: “You're always laughing up there and I want to know what you're laughing about!”

SF: The new book you're currently working on: does it have a title yet?

HERBERT: No. And you've probably heard that I don't talk about work in progress, mainly because you use the same energies to talk about the work that you use to write it, and you want to save that energy for the paper. That's really good advice. If there are any would-be writers around, tell them this, because I've seen more and more writers who go tell their best friend the story and you never see the story. And that's a waste.

SF: It's like what Ray Bradbury said in an introduction to a short story collection by Henry Kuttner. He said that back in the forties Henry Kuttner told him to shut up because he was talking about story ideas. Bradbury said it was the best advice he'd ever had and he followed it.

HERBERT: It's the best advice I ever had. I got it from a professional. He told me: “Don't talk your damn story, write it!” And, boy, I suddenly realized the guy was right. You're talking ’em and you’re not writing ’em. Save it for the page.

SF: Does it ever worry you that you're always thought of as Frank Herbert, author of *Dune*, and that seems to rule out all the other works you've ever written?

HERBERT: No. A book has to stand on its own. Various people have various favourites. I get people coming up to me and saying: “Are you going to write any more of the Jorj X. McKie stories? Or any more Indian stories?” I get people asking if I'm going to write any more in the *Dune* series. I even have people asking me if I'm going to write any more of the *Green Brain* type of book. In fact, I don't know of any particular book I've written where I haven't had somebody come up and say: “That one was my favourite.” Fine. You can't be all things to all people. But you can try.

SF: It’s just the publicity the publishers always use – Frank Herbert, author of *Dune*, as though you hadn't actually written anything else.

HERBERT: I know. And, of course, you get people coming up to you and saying: “I've read your book.” (Laughter)

SF: How much of *Dune* was preconceived?

HERBERT: The *Dune* trilogy was one book in my head. Parts of the second two were written before I'd really finished *Dune* itself. I'm not absolutely sure, but I know that the last chapter of *Dune* was not re-written. But it's ancient history in my head now and I'd have to think hard about it and go back and reconstruct it.

SF: If the trilogy was planned from the outset as one book, what led to the most recent novel, *God Emperor of Dune*?

HERBERT: Well, that's because Leto II would not get out of my head. (Laughter) I had to do that book. It was just forced on me. One day I started making notes about him and I realized I was cooked at that point. I had to do it.

SF: It is inevitable that we find ourselves talking about that one particular series and *Dune* especially. Are you often asked about the

issues you deal with in your other works?

HERBERT: Not as much as I've been asked about *Dune*.

SF: What one book have you done since *Dune* that has given you personal satisfaction and excitement, covering areas not dealt with in the *Dune* cycle?

HERBERT: I think *Soul Catcher* is a book that does precisely what I set out to do. It fits all the criteria that I had set myself.

SF: Could you give us that wonderful story about the two *Soul Catchers* and the experience you had with Max Franklin?

HERBERT: Well, I wrote a book called *Soul Catcher*. It had the same title. It was about the North West Coast Indians and had similar characterization, but it wasn't the same story at all. Part of the blockage was pride. I knew I was the definitive expert on these particular Indians because of the way I had been raised with them. And I had written this book – it was completed – and I had this experience at the University of Washington “Plunge” where I was on the staff. This week I had to have the “Plunge” done to me, so that I had the same experience the students did. We bid for these little – they weren't puzzles – they were little block sets that you built toy houses out of. Like Lincoln Logs or erector sets, but they were all

wood. One of them constructed an apartment house, one constructed a two-flat building, another one was a split-level suburban, and another one was a farm house. So they had all of these things there and we were supposed to bid on which ones we wanted and were supposed to put them together as a team, five or six people on a team, but not speaking. And it was billed to us as a psychological experiment, and in fact there was a person from the university psychology department to oversee each assembly effort, to make sure we didn't talk, that we did it only with gestures, and so on. And we were told that if we built it correctly, we'd get our money back, which wasn't much – two or three dollars at the most for the most expensive one. And they stopped us short of the hour. We were supposed to have an hour to do it and they gave us fifty minutes. They then condemned everyone; we got none of our money back. So we went into the common room, feeling kind of put upon, and Max Franklin then told us that the staff had taken all the money and gone out and bought beer and candy with it and pissed it all off. (Laughter) God, were we mad! It was a trick pulled on us, you see. Then Max Franklin said: “You're angry now.” She said: “This just happened to you once. It happens to Indians every day of their lives”. And all I could think about at that instant was: “Ohmigod! That awful book! That hideous, terrible book!” And I went home that night and I burned every bit of it in the fireplace, every scrap of it was gone. I didn't want anybody ever to see that terrible book. Then I sat down and re-did the whole thing in three months. And it just seemed to write itself. It just came out.

SF: You had a certain anger about the Indian predicament behind you when you wrote *Soul Catcher*?

HERBERT: The first one, yes. There wasn't so much an anger as a sense that I understood the predicament. And when I wrote the second one it wasn't anger either, but I know I understood it then. I appear to have been extremely successful with the Indian culture. In fact I've had really interesting feedback. An American Indian leader, a very famous name (you'd recognize it, I'm not at liberty to use it), at a tribal conference in South Dakota, got up and slammed a copy of *Soul Catcher* down on the table and said: “Why does it have to be left to a white science fiction author to tell what it feels like to be an Indian?” He was trying to whip them up into realizing the fact that they should be writing of their own experiences. And it's true! They should be.

SF: That’s quite a compliment, isn't it?

HERBERT: I felt it was a compliment. Anyway, that's how it happened and the book came out of me and it did what I wanted it to do.

SF: Briefly, could you give us a run-down on the theme of *Soul Catcher*?

HERBERT: It is the collision between two mythologies – the North West Coast American Indian and the Greek mythology of Western culture – the Greek dominated mythology, I should say, because it isn't totally Greek. It's my understanding of this particular Indian culture and, of course, my analysis of the Greek-dominated Western

culture.

SF: Going on from that idea of the American Indians feeling themselves to be outcasts from the mainstream of North American culture, do you as a science fiction writer feel in some way outcast from the normal mass of humanity?

HERBERT: No, I don't feel an outcast. But I feel like a very particular kind of observer. While you're in a story, you're out there “x” thousands of years away from today. Okay, you finish the story. Now you come back to what? Primitive times, aren't they? (Laughter)

SF: And yet you're writing about things that are really no different from today.

HERBERT: Yeah.

SF: The trappings, the furnishings are all advanced, but with things like the Butlerian Jihad in the *Dune* cycle, you've found a way to limit the setting from being too progressive, too outlandish.

HERBERT: I did it deliberately. I postulated these fixtures of the story which would frame it for my purposes.

SF: As an illustration of how things don't change all that much, you confirmed in one interview that when you were writing *Dune*, you had in your mind images of OPEC as CHOAM, the present world oil situation, and so on.

HERBERT: I was making analogues, you see. Water was money. We don't teach economics in our society, have you noticed that? We don't teach how the economic system works. Even in the best schools of economics there is a kind of a high level abstraction ladder of remoteness. You're way up that abstraction ladder and not down there dealing with the nitty-gritty of it. How many of us, for example, realize that if you borrow money from a bank, it's the same as printing that much new money? Most people don't know it. Most people don't even think of the pressure on inflation created by plastic money, by credit cards.

SF: It would be interesting to see what would happen if all the dues owed by the countries of the world to other countries were called in – to see who would end up with all the money.

HERBERT: I had a taxi-driver in London one day and I just absolutely freaked him out. We were stopped at a stop sign and two big limousines rolled by full of Arabs. And this taxi-driver said, very bitterly: “They're buying up all of England!”. And I said: “Why do you mind? They're just bringing in wealth, making jobs, and if they get too uppity you can expropriate them.” (laughter) And he turned

around and said: “I never thought of that!”.

SF: Science fiction keeps on exploring these often dangerous and provocative areas, stepping on toes…

HERBERT: Oh, yes. For example, look at the degenerative force created upon the Spanish civilization by all the gold they found in the New World – a particular kind of economic pressure! It says something about capital and how capital can be used. I happen to be a capitalist, but for a very peculiar reason. I believe that capitalism tends to break down of its own excesses, and we're forced to make adjustments at that time. The so-called “managed” societies bury their mistakes because the managerial bureaucracy is dedicated to preserving its power. And so they keep perpetuating those mistakes to the point sometimes where you can't do anything. You're lost in a morass of one mistake piled upon another.

SF: An interesting example of this self-perpetuating system is the American Drug Authority. It is now such a large employment force that in order for it to exist, it has to have corrupt agents bringing the drugs into the country for the agency to chase up.

HERBERT: Oh, indeed! Do you know what happened to the three and a half million dollars worth of heroin that was taken in the French Connection? It disappeared from the New York City Police Property Room! I've been asked several times what would I do to solve the drug problem. Well, in the first place, I wouldn't try to solve

the drug problem. But I would try to reduce the impact of it upon our society. And that could be done quite simply: take the profit out of it! Turn it over to the public health service if you must, but take the profit out of it. Make it available! Cheap! Get the government into this business and you can get your fix for fifty cents. It's been discovered quite conclusively in the U.S. that more than three-fourths of the new addicts are created by the system – addicts building a market to support their own habits. And less than a quarter of them are what you might call “joy riders”. But the damnedest lies are told about it, and, of course, there is enough profit in it right now that you can buy the sacrosanct briefcase of an incoming ambassador if you want. And I will submit to you that the ambassadorial and consular force of a certain Asian country was one of the main suppliers of heroin in the United States for a long while. It may still be. That's the way they've supported their operations in the U.S.. You can buy an Air Force general; you can buy long strings of border guards; you can buy the key police of a major city in the U.S., say, New York…

SF: So the economic strength of the system is now beginning to overwhelm and absorb those agencies designed to protect that system?

HERBERT: Yeah.

SF: At what point do you think it will reach the level of being a part of the governmental system of that particular country?

HERBERT: I think it already is. I think that they own Senators and Congressmen right now.

SF: And consequently the science fiction writer can assume a provocative stance and make comment behind his analogues, which leads us back to *Dune* for a moment and an analogy question about Salusa Secundus and the planet Dosadi. The conditions set up on Dosadi seem particularly close to the military society cum police state that Salusa Secundus must have been. Was that deliberate?

HERBERT: I used the same motivational technique in both.

SF: *The Dosadi Experiment* is a deeper, far more concentrated work in that respect than *Dune*, but there's quite a time period separating these two books, isn't there?

HERBERT: I'd have to think…

BEV: Ten or fifteen years.

SF: It was funny to watch that business session this morning where they were talking about the sites for the national conventions for the next two years. Now if that had been a Gowachin situation…

(Laughter) …those putting forward the various points could have been killed for their sophistries and protocols… (Laughter)

HERBERT: Let me give a real capper. I was at the A.A.A.S. in Washington DC, and a government attorney recognized me in the elevator at the Sheraton and informed me that the American Bar Association had appointed a three-man committee to examine the Gowachin law system and make a comparison to see if… now get this… to see if an alien legal system could give us any insights into our own legal system. (Laughter)

SF: What sort of compliment is that?

HERBERT: I don't know! (Laughter) But it broke me up. Because what I did, you see, was invert our own!

SF: And in this case, it's not an alien legal system. You created it.

HERBERT: That's right. I inverted the existing Western legal system.

BEV: Or the man was talking to an alien. One or the other! (Laughter)

SF: Do you read much fiction?

HERBERT: No, I don't have time, really. I'm mostly reading non-fiction.

SF: What about movies? Do you have any particular movies or directors you admire?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. I think *Walkabout*, Nick Roeg's movie made here in Australia, is one of the most flawless films that you could possibly imagine. It's beautifully visualized; true pictorial beauty. It's most marvelously cut so that you get this strange lifting rhythm in it and then a depression, and then this lifting rhythm and the depression. And you know what's going to happen, you're well aware, and yet there is nobody in there telling you. But I won't give it away. You should see it. It's a jewel. But I haven't seen too many movies lately.

SF: Have you seen the recent science fiction movies? Like *Star Wars*?

HERBERT: Oh, I saw *Star Wars*, yes. I saw the rip-offs of Gordy Dickson, Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, myself, everybody. (Laughter)

This is Hollywood, you know. They practice rip-off down there. They lack imagination themselves so they dip into the imagination of others and they like to do it where they don't have to pay for it.

SF: George Lucas claims that he's using some of the best-known images from science fiction as his tribute to them.

HERBERT: It was a comic book for the screen. And there's a comparison to be made here, between what happened in science fiction in the early days of the pulps, creating the cliches of today's science fiction; preparing an audience so that you don't have to explain a lot of things.

SF: Could you tell us about *Dune* as a film?

HERBERT: The film: We have a director – David Lynch – the man who did *Eraserhead* and *The Elephant Man*. I am absolutely delighted with the choice. I don't know of a director who would be more pleasing to me. He's the very kind of a man that is needed to do this job. In addition, he's a fan. And he wants to do *Dune*?

SF: He came to the project because he wanted to do it? Not because some Hollywood producer said: “Get David Lynch, he's free right now?”

HERBERT: It worked both ways. It was one of those marvelous meetings.

SF: What about your own position regarding the film?

HERBERT: I am in the contract as technical adviser. Now, your guess as to what that means is probably as good as mine. (Laughter) But I do have input. They listen to me. And they listen with attention. I listen to them with respect and they listen to me with respect, which is a nice way to approach this.

And I understand the difficulties of translating the written word – the page – to the screen. when you stop and think about it, the cheapest set-building in the world is in your imagination. They have to be able to build a real thing that will look real up there on the screen. You'll look at it and you'll say: Yes! That's Arrakis! That's Dune! That's a worm, that's an ornithopter, you follow what I mean? We can take these flights of fancy in our imagination. I had the question the other day: “Do you think we could have an ornithopter?”

Well, I know technically that the only things really preventing our having an ornithopter are the right kind of power source and a light, extremely strong material. If we get those two things, we're going to have an ornithopter. And there are advantages in having an ornithopter. The Harrier, for example, is a perfect example of what I mean, if you know the aircraft I'm referring to. So I don't speak from ignorance. I am a pilot, so I know the advantages of having such a craft and I know what's keeping us from having it. And this is marvelous. I just said: “Well, we invented a material that will do this

and we have the power source, and here it is!" (Laughter) And we may be closer than you think because if we get into space with self-sustaining colonies, it is possible to make alloys in space that are impossible to make on Earth. I won't go into the technical details, take my word for it. If you want to look into it, the reports are there from NASA, from the L5 Society, on the advantages of doing this and what is available to us if we start smelting processes in space. So we may be very close to some extremely new, very exciting materials.

SF: What about the design factor of the film? You obviously have a conception and that conception will not be what you see on the screen – in garments, in mannerisms, the whole thing. Do you have any quality control on that at all?

HERBERT: Yes. They want me to look at the artwork.

SF: Speaking of artwork, what about John Schoenherr's renderings for your *Dune* stories over the years?

HERBERT: My favourite! Right now I'm trying to get him involved in the project. I don't know if I'll be successful. I don't know if John's time and their time and everything else will come together. But I am making an effort to do this.

SF: He catches your mental images of Dune, the sandworms, Arrakeen, the characters…?

HERBERT: Oh, boy! Everything. It's eerie. I mean, it's eerie! It's as though he got into my head. It's neck-hair-raising, he's so much in there.

SF: Wasn’t Chris Foss one of the early consultants for the movie?

HERBERT: He was, with Alejandro Jodorowsky.

SF: And H.R. Giger too, wasn't he?

HERBERT: Yeah. Giger was there. They hired him off *Heavy Metal*.

SF: Do you worry that when they actually produce the film, it will look totally different from your conception?

HERBERT: I have some worries about that. But at this point they're minor, because there really is an effort to meet that general norm. I'm sure that in your head there's a slightly different view than mine, as I'm sure there would be if we went around this room. But there is

a norm in there somewhere and there really is a desire on the part of the production team to meet that norm, for economic reasons if for no others. If people believe they've seen *Dune*, they're going to spread the word. But beyond that, let me reassert that I don't doubt at all that David Lynch really wants to do this. And he's a fan.

SF: There's the director's personal involvement in his creation as opposed to his role as a person visualizing your creation. You see no conflict between your conception of *Dune* and David Lynch's?

HERBERT: I don't see any conflict yet. There are areas where I wouldn't argue with him. I wouldn't argue, for example, with my German translator. Do you see what I'm saying? I don't speak German. I might argue with my Spanish translator, but not with my French translator, certainly.(Laughter) The point is that they're translating, and a lot of people don't recognize that.

SF: To take up this point of translations, how much of your work has actually been translated? And into how many languages?

HERBERT: Twelve languages. Right now I think almost all of my work has been translated, including the short story collections.

SF: Do you know if any of it sells behind the Iron Curtain?

BEV: There's a version of *Dune* in Serbo-Croat.

HERBERT: I don't think I could list them all, but they're in German, Japanese, Italian, French, Spanish, Israeli, Serbo-Croat, Swedish… English (Laughter)… where you had “lift” instead of “elevator”. (Laughter)

SF: About Jack Vance, Poul Anderson, and yourself. You're all worldbuilders, all responsible for creating alien cultues and whole planetary societies, and you're also good friends. The name “Noah Arkwright” crops up in *God Emperor of Dune* as the author of a text referred to in passing. I believe this is a name that the three of you actually intended to use when you collaborated on a novel.

HERBERT: No, it wasn't a novel. It was a novella…

SF: When you were building the famous houseboat. Could you tell us about that?

HERBERT: Well, Jack, Poul Anderson, and I went together to build a houseboat on San Francisco Bay. And while we were there, pounding nails and cutting wood and what-not, we decided we would plot a story. And we were going to write it together because we thought it would be fun to support our houseboat habit (Laughter) with a story we wrote while we were doing the building. Then Poul

got interested in something else, Jack likewise, and they shoved it off onto me and said: “Go do it!” So I did and it's called “The Primitives”. The essence of it is that the actual Stone Age artisans were women. They were the ones who shaped the spearheads and the axeheads and made the artifacts because they were home around the camp-fire while the men were out hunting. The problem of the story is that they have what is called the Mars Diamond, the biggest diamond in

all of history. Only it's the most complex diamond ever discovered as far as cutting it is concerned. They're afraid to cut it. And finally it's stolen and the thieves have a captive – a man whose family has a time-machine. So they get this idea of going back in time and getting a primitive who really feels the stone and can cut it. She is brought forward in time to do this and is left alone to do it. And she makes a spearhead out of it. (Laughter) Perfectly logical.

SF: And the name 'Noah Arkwright'?

HERBERT: Then I saved 'Noah Arkwright', you see. (Laughter) And Holjance Vohnbrook. (Laughter) And Pander Oulson! Don't forget Pander Oulson! (Laughter)

SF: And, of course, Jack Vance came back at you in the *Demon Princes* books where he quotes the mythological Frerb Hankbert! And A.N. der Poulson! You in turn have a Holjance appearing as a character in *The Dosadi Experiment* and now this *Noah Arkwright*. What about Jack Vance's novel *To Live Forever*? You and Jack actually did co-plot that together?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. We plotted it together in Mexico.

SF: And really did toss a coin to see who would write it?

HERBERT: Oh yes, we really did toss a coin.

There followed further reminiscences then about that time in Mexico when the Herberts and the Vances lived together and set up their own little writing "community". Gradually, the conversation drifted back to the subject of the proposed film, Dune*, and having spoken of how he could imagine Orson Welles as Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, an 'unknown' young actor as Paul, and Sean Connery as Duke Leto Atreides, Frank Herbert made one comment which was of particular interest to Australians. He was most interested to learn that we had areas of desert on our own continent that would do Arrakis proud. What with the language and liaison problems connected with using the North African locations currently being scouted, who knows what might happen?*

EDITOR'S NOTE

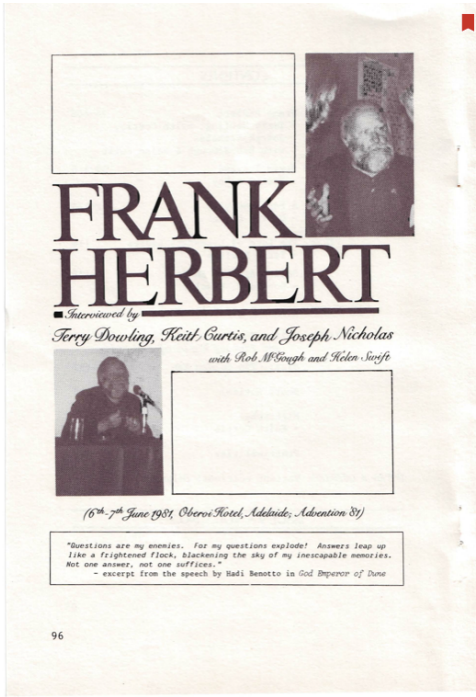
An interview can be a living thing. Sometimes prepared "key" questions get overlooked because the flow of conversation goes

somewhere else. Sometimes they are deliberately abandoned as it is realized that these questions have been fully answered elsewhere. Both situations prevailed in our talk with Frank Herbert. First of all, there were the oversights. Questions about his professional background, those non-fiction works that form the majority of his reading, and the various influences on his writing and thought, etc., did not get asked because other things occupied the time: things that possibly give us a fuller picture of the man's humanity. But other questions – about his particular philosophical stance and that provocative interdisciplinary "generalist" position expressed so persuasively and so dramatically in his books – were deliberately withheld. For in an important sense, Frank Herbert does answer the most fundamental questions about his position as

writer through his handling of the themes of his books, through the thoughts and words of his characters, and through the use of prefatory notes to chapters. To seek a re-statement of these ideas in interview is not so much discourteous as to disregard what has been made abundantly available. When we are given that ancient Fremen saying in *Dune Messiah* that: "Truth suffers from too much analysis", we are reminded that, unlike some science fiction writers, Frank Herbert does amply express his key ideas, enacting them in novel form again and again. In re-directing the reader back to this writer's works, then, we can perhaps take one of these expressions – an excerpt from "The Mentat Handbook" in *Children of Dune* – as a most fitting description of Frank Herbert's approach as writer and observer:

> Above all else, the mentat must be a generalist, not a specialist. It is wise to have decisions of great moment monitored by generalists. Experts and specialists lead you quickly into chaos. They are a source of useless nitpicking, the ferocious quibble

over a comma. The mentat-generalist, on the other hand, should bring to decision making a healthy common sense. He must not cut himself off from the broad sweep of what is happening in his universe. He must remain capable of saying: “There's no real mystery about this at the moment. This is what we want now. It may prove wrong later, but we'll correct that when we come to it.” The mentat-generalist must understand that anything which we can identify as our universe is merely part of larger phenomena. But the expert looks backward; 'he looks into the narrow standards of his own specialty. The generalist looks outward; he looks for living principles, knowing full well that such principles change, that they develop. It is to the characteristics of change itself that the mentat-generalist must look. There can be no permanent catalogue of such change, no handbook or manual. You must look at it with as few preconceptions as possible, asking yourself: “Now what is this thing doing?”



FRANK HERBERT

Interviewed by

Terry Dowling, Keith Curtis, and Joseph Nicholas

with Rob McGough and Helen Swift

(6th-7th June 1981, Oberoi Hotel, Adelaide, Advention '81)

"Questions are my enemies. For my questions explode! Answers leap up like a frightened flock, blackening the sky of my inescapable memories. Not one answer, not one suffices."
- excerpt from the speech by Hadi Benotto in God Emperor of Dune

A general question to begin: what's your view of the purpose of science fiction?

- Well, to entertain. To ask the questions that aren't being asked anywhere else. I think it has a scientific function in asking the hard questions. We'll ask those questions that aren't being asked elsewhere. They're fair game for us. What if ecology breaks down? What if this kind of a society develops? Or what if we get a particularly obtrusive police state - the *Nineteen Eighty-Four* thing? None of these stories, I believe, *prevents* those evolutionary or devolutionary processes, but they sure as hell alert us to what's happening. Whole terms have come into the language now - Big Brother, and so on.

It was your use of the word "ecology" in novels as different as Dune *and* The Dragon in the Sea *that made me look up its full meaning as that: "Branch of biology dealing with living organisms' habits, modes of life, and relations to their surroundings."*

- Have you ever thought of this room as a natural setting?

You made me do so when Captain Sparrow talked about the inside of the Fenian Ram *as an "enveloped world with its own special ecology", and Leto II referred to his future dynasty as "an ecosystem in miniature". I'd never thought about it like that before. I hadn't realised that people interacting in any closed environment -*

- Not just closed environment; in *any* environment! We live in a technological world and there's a feedback system going on. We are inventing things, making things, and they are having an influence on us and our societies. You can break it down. We have political ecology, social ecology, religious ecology, you just go right on. The systems have their interacting feedbacks.

You have a recurring theme of survival, of humanity being tested and put under stress and forced to confront what is basic to it, forced even to consider the fact that it's in a crisis situation all the time - a fact so often overlooked.

- Yes, well we really are, all the time. Maybe not under as much stress sometimes as at other times, but all the time. I can give you a few instances. I don't know whether it's the same in Australia as in the U.S. - I suspect it is - but when you get into your automobile in the U.S. and start driving, your blood pressure goes up dramatically. Detroit spent quite a bit of money discovering that if you got in your car, turned on the ignition to start the motor, and eight seconds later the motor's not running, your blood pressure goes right up. You have eight seconds. Now I'm sure that's a conditioned reaction; the technological toy has conditioned us. Because I know damn well that if my grandfather didn't get the harness on the horse in eight seconds, his blood pressure didn't go up. Maybe if he didn't have the horse harnessed in five minutes and the horse was spirited and skittish, his blood pressure probably went up then. But it's a different feedback system.

In Children of Dune, *Leto II refers to the various mystiques behind any civilization which act as barriers against change: "the religious mystique, the hero-leader mystique, the messiah mystique, the mystique of science/technology, and the mystique of nature itself". These things are seen as barriers, while a lot of cultures would actively support the idea that they are a part and parcel of a normal healthy growth. Do you see these things as limitations?*

- No. I see that some societies look at them as limitations, especially Western cultures. Another thing happens, too. If you think you know, it tends to prevent you from asking questions. And the mystique of thinking you know, of course, is all bound up in other things - the guilt of

Source: http://tau.solahpmo.com/assets/Australian_Herbert_Interview.pdf

Starburst Magazine, 1981

God Emperor of Dune, by John Bowles, Starburst Magazine #37, 09/1981

There is a select handful of science fiction writers who are bankable in the same way that certain filmstars are bankable: publishers know that their name on a project virtually ensures its commercial success. Stephen King, for instance, is very very bankable, though he isn't generally associated with SF as such. Asimov, Bradbury, Clarke and Heinlein are bankable; so, to a lesser extent, are Farmer, McCaffrey, Le Guth, Niven and (in Britain, at least) Moorcock. Frank Herbert is very bankable, end when a new project includes that magic word “Dune” in the title, it becomes just about the most desirable property of all.

Herbert's latest novel *God Emperor of Dune*, has already, in commercial terms, outstripped its predecessors in the USA. The figures are impressive: approaching three months on the national bestseller lists, almost always in one of the top three places; 200,000 copies in print in hardcover. Things have come a long way since *Dune* was first published in 1965 in a small edition by a fairly obscure American publisher (the major companies weren't interested: they knew that such a long science fiction novel wasn't commercially viable). Copies of that first edition can now fetch up to $1,000 – it's *that* rare – while the book has gone on to sell countless millions of copies around the world, becoming in the process perhaps the single most famous modern science fiction novel.

Herbert spent a few days in London recently, helping to publicize *God Emperor of Dune* with interviews and signing sessions. I took the opportunity to talk with him about his career in general and the *Dune* books in particular.

After completing his education at the University of Washington in Seattle, Herbert went into journalism, a career he followed until he eventually became a full-time writer. He worked as a reporter in a wide range of capacities: “General assignment, rewrite, copy-editor, feature-editor, photographer… I was finally assistant news editor on the major daily in San Francisco when I realized that I had a choice: either do that or write. That was about 15 years ago.”

He made the decision there and then and has never looked back. He already had many years of fiction writing experience behind him, having sold his first stories in the late 1940s, and having made his debut as a science fiction writer in 1952. Once he had started writing SF he largely stuck to it in preference to other forms of fiction (though one later novel, *Soul Catcher*, is a contemporary study of the dash between the traditional American Indian culture and that of the modern USA). He explains the preference for SF succinctly: “elbow room”. In other words, the freedom to develop and explore ideas. Short stories appear not to have offered him sufficient elbow-room, and he did not really begin to establish his name until he turned to novels. His first, known alternatively as *Under Pressure* (his preferred title) or *The Dragon in the Sea*, is a fast-paced psychological thriller set on board a submarine during a future war. It remains, along with *Soul Catcher*, the novel which Herbert chooses as a personal favourite among his work. His second was *Dune*, the first magazine serial version of which appeared in 1963. It was followed by *Dune Messiah*, *Children of Dune* and by the new book. I asked how much planning and preparation had gone into the book.

“Well, there was six years of research, though I was also doing other things, of course. Then about a year and a half of writing. I saw the *Dune* trilogy as one book – absolutely unpublishable, of course. In fact I had parts of the second two written before the first was completed, but as I wrote I felt I had to get more material, do more research and flesh them out more than I had originally conceived.”

Dune is perhaps the supreme example of what has come to be known among science fiction critics as “worldcraft”: the building of a complete alien world, with its own geography, history, biology and ecology. The planet *Dune*, or Arrakis is the real star of the book – a desert world, inhabited by gigantic sandworms and by a human population, the Fremen, who survive by scrupulous preservation of every precious drop of moisture. How did Herbert go about building this detailed and convincing environment?

“I had two concepts riding on me at the time. One was a book about the messianic complex in human society – why *do* we follow a leader? While I was doing this I was fishing around fora setting at a town called Florence, Oregon, where the US Department of Agriculture was controlling sand dunes by plantation and other techniques, and I got caught by the concept of how we inflict ourselves on the planet, and what we can do about it. What is the timeframe within which these things happen? I started researching that and in the process I saw that the two went together.”

The messiah in *Dune* is the reluctant figure of Paul Atreides, who resists the role because he has prescient visions which show bloody religious wars following his acclamation. It is this reluctance on the part of the protagonist to fulfill what appears to be an inevitable destiny which gives the novel part of its strength.The ecological transformation of the desert planet, Herbert's other original idea, is only seen over the course of the first three novels, and inevitably has so given rise to some disappointment among readers that the

desert world itself does not feature so strongly after the first book. But as Herbert points out, there is always some possible objection to sequels: either the author is accused of repetition, or, if the sequel is different, of depriving the reader of the chance to relive the original experience. Herbert took the second, and more dangerous course, but the continuing success of the sequels suggests that he has managed to keep his audience. The latest, *God Emperor of Dune* was not part of the original plan. “It came about because I'd created a character who wouldn't let go of me: Leto II. The whole idea of the human and the monster in one flesh kept fascinating me; and the idea of an empire, a society, a civilization, that's under the control of one dominant figure all those millennia. What kind of society evolves out of that? I wanted to play that imaginative game, so I went back to it.”

At the end of *Children of Dune*, Leto – Paul's son – achieves a kind of symbiotic fusion with the larvel stage of the sandworm, and in doing so acquires superpowers. *God Emperor* begins three thousand years later, with Leto still ruling the human galaxy, but by this time transformed into a half-human half-sandworm creature. It’s a compelling image, and the book seems sure to enjoy the same popularity as its predecessors. The ending offers intriguing possibilities for further *Dune* novels, a possibility which Herbert does not rule out. “I have no aversion to it. I have no story in mind at the moment. If the mood strikes me, if I get an idea and I think it would make a good story, then I'll do it, but I'm not playing the ‘God, I've got to do another Sherlock Holmes story’ game.”

The possibility of a *Dune* movie has approached and receded several times over the years. I asked Herbert about the history of the project. “Arthur P. Jacobs bought it around 1972, and then Jacobs died and APJAC, the corporation, sold it to the French group who hired Jodorowsky to do it. Then, for lots of diverse reasons they dropped it. They didn’t know what they had, really. I was in the

contract as a technical advisor but they never called me in – which was essential a breach of contract, but then I wasn't too interested in what they were doing anyway, It was obvious that Alejandro was going to do a horsewhip the Pope story!"

The book was subsequently resold to Dino de Laurentiis, who passed off half of it to Universal. Ridley Scott was brought in to direct but, according to Herbert, had rather different ideas as to what the movie should be. "Ridley said to me that he wanted to do an incest picture… Paul and Jessica."

Jessica is Paul's mother, and there's certainly no hint of incest in the novel. Did Herbert know *why* Ridley Scott wanted to turn *Dune* into a film about incest, and what was his reaction to the idea? "I just walked away. I didn't do any great breast-beating or shouting; that tends not to achieve anything in the movie industry, I don't know why he wanted to do it… Well, if you look at Ridley's movies I have yet to see a real human relationship in them. Maybe he doesn't want to get into that. He does tend to go for shock value; that's one of the *schticks* he's riding. Maybe he thinks it's the only way to be successful. I'm not in his head, so I can't say, "Yes, this is why he does it." I said to him that there would be a lot of disappointed people, but I didn't make any big argument about it because I had no control. I had influence – and I don't know whether that influence was substantially effective in the fact that Ridley's no longer the director. I'm not in those high-level decision making conferences."

Meanwhile the film got nowhere. "They started working on a script. Then Ridley got other things to do; then his option lapsed. Now they have David Lynch and David, as far as I'm concerned, is an ideal choice. Number one, above all the others, he's a *Dune* fan, so he wants to do the book. And what he did with *The Elephant Man* shows that he can. He has that translator's ability – superbly, I think. He has a good team. The thing that's been holding it up is the

Writer's Guild strike. When that's over, I would imagine in a month to six weeks we'll have a script. I wrote a script quite a while ago which they have. It's t too long, but some parts of it may survive."

The technical problems will be formidable, particularly the convincing rendition of a sandworm – a creature so large that, fully-grown, its mouth is the size of a football pitch. A mixture of model and sectional mock-up will almost certainly be used to create it on screen. Design is also important, and here Herbert hopes to involve American artist John Schoenherr, who illustrated the original magazine serials and later did the paintings for the *Dune Calendar*, in the project. One must hope he succeeds, for of all the the visual renditions so far Schoenherr's is indisputably the most effective.

Herbert was also involved for awhile in *Flash Gordon*, he spent six weeks at Pinewood working on the script while Nicolas Roeg was still the director. He hasn't seen the finished product, so has no idea if any element of his work survived. It is interesting (and frustrating!) to speculate on what their collaboration might have been like.

Finally, with the next appointment of a busy schedule looming, I asked his opinion of *Star Wars*, since many people have pointed out some resemblances between its desert planet sequences and *Dune*. "I think somebody came up with 16 points of exact comparison, and that cannot be chance. I belong to a small select group, including Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle and several others, who sat down at a table one time and agreed that we were going to form a kind of club called 'We Will Not Sue Star Wars'. The fascinating thing to me is that the *Star Wars* people went after *Battlestar Galactica* on the basis that the creative artist's work ought to belong to the creative artist, which I thought was very amusing in the circumstances!"

Vector Magazine, 1981

Singing for Supper, by Joseph Nicholas, Vector Magazine, 08/1982

This interview was conducted in two stages on 6 and 7 June 1981 at the Oberoi Motel in Adelaide, Australia during Advention 81*, the Australian national convention, with questions being asked by (in alphabetical order) Keith Curtis, Terry Dowling, Rob McGough, Joseph Nicolas and Helen Swift. This transcript has been prepared by Joseph Nicholas, supplemented by additional material from Charles Platt's* Who Writes Science Fiction? *and an interview published In the May/June 1981 issue of* The Mother Earth News.

There can be few readers of *Vector* who have not read Frank Herbert's *Dune*, but how many of you have wondered what author himself is like? The photograph on the next page at least shows you what he looks like, but communicates little of his personality, making him seem too forbidding by half. He is in fact the very epitome of one's childhood image of Santa Claus, with a manner to match: cheerful, friendly, yet with a strong sense of identity and independence. Raised on a subsistence tarn in Kitsap County, Washington during the 1920s and 1930s, he was imbued early on with the need to be self-reliant, to do things for himself without waiting for others to help. As the Interview with him published in

Charles Platt's *Who Writes Science Fiction?* relates: "…when you're making hay, and the hay-baler breaks down, and it's the weekend and the handy little hay-haler repair store is closed, you don't say, 'Well, there'll be no hay this year.' You leap in and repair the thing. You don't even *question* that you can repair it. Obviously you can." In that interview, he goes on to say that he thinks "self-limitation is the major limiting factor for most people in the world. People could do far more things than they believe they can. They've been led to believe in these limitations by various factors – the way they're brought up. and their families. (But) if you have a quiescent population, it's easier to govern; you don't want a lot of people out there doing strange things, producing new things, because new things are often dangerous to the people in power."

This would seem to imply some distrust on his part of 'big government', or perhaps even governments in general, because of the way they 'suppress' the rights and instincts of the ordinary citizen. In an interview published in the May/June 1981 of *The Mother Earth News* an American ecology magazine, he said: "I think it's vital that men and women learn to mistrust *all* forms of powerful, centralised authority. Big government tends to create an enormous delay between the signals that come from the people and the response of the leaders. Put it this way: suppose there were a delay time of five minutes between the moment you tuned the steering wheel on your car and the time the front tires reacted. (…) Governments have the same slow-response effect – and the bigger the government, the more slowly it reacts. So to me, the best government is one that's very responsive to the needs of its people… that is, the *least*, *loosest* and *most local* government."

When the magazine's interviewer points out that, over the past few decades, society had bee moving in the opposite direction, he replied that he didn't think it would continue to do so because "as communication systems improve – and with the new computers that

are continually being developed, communications are coming on like gangbusters – people won't be so dependent on the often one-sided reporting of the conventional media for their information. Folks will see that we *can* take control of some social functions now handled by big government schools, taxation, whatever – and that the 'bigger and stronger is always more effective' idea is a phony bill of goods. So I see an evolutionary movement towards a certain kind of fragmentation…" Indeed, in his eyes this movement is already under way: in one of the interviews he gave to newspapers and radio stations in Adelaide, Australia, in June 1981, he said that he felt the swing back to the right (and, presumably, the desire to 'privatise' the economy evinced by the current Reagan and Thatcher administrations) in America and Europe in recent years was a direct reaction to the increasing ponderousness and inefficiency of the 'managerial bureaucracies' that had waxed fat in the 1960s and 1970s. Not that this makes him a libertarian in the mould of, say, Robert Heinlein and Jerry Pournelle; in *The Mother Earth News* interview, he said: "We're going to have to make very tough evaluations of how we instill morality into our young… and how we help people come to believe that all humans are similar creatures and that the world will be better off if everyone does try to live by something like the Golden Rule. And we'll probably discover – possibly only after suffering a certain amount of pain – that the only way to spread such values is, naturally, on the community and individual levels."

But how do these political concerns relate to his fiction, particularly when that fiction is thought of as having primarily ecological, anthropological and metaphysical slants? The answer, perhaps surprisingly, is that politics has rather more important a role than might be supposed. One of the inspirations behind *Dune*, for instance, was his interest in messiah figures, especially the charismatic leader who can get his country or his people into a quagmire through their blind, unthinking obedience to his fiat. In

support of this contention, he names (in one of the above-mentioned Adelaide interviews) President John F. Kennedy as a prime example – a man who, by holding out the promise of Camelot, was directly responsible for the disastrous American involvement In Vietnam. Seeking to dramatise this messiah complex, he turned to religion as the best, most natural means of doing so, and began to study the comparisons between various theological doctrines… realising in the process that the world's most important (or at least influential) ones had been bred in its harsher climes. In particular its desert regions, thus was conceived the planet of Arrakis, one of the most detailed imaginary constructs in post-war SF.

At the same time this enabled him to dramatise another of his concerns of the time: ecology, and in particular the idea that man should as far as possible adapt himself to the environment rather than simply impose his wishes upon it and attempt to remodel it wholesale. His interest in this line of thought, and indeed in ecology in general, had been sparked when, as a reporter for a San Francisco newspaper, he was sent to cover a USDA project in Florence, Oregon, for controlling the encroachment of sand dunes onto their runways. Their solution had been to plant the dunes with poverty grass, which had multiplied and spread, driving out the native species of grass and in consequence upsetting the life-cycles of the insects that lived on then. Searching for other examples of unforeseen side-effects to back up his story, he came across the tale of the mongoose, which had been introduced into Hawaii in the late nineteenth century to control the rat population and which, having exterminated most of it, became feral and began attacking the bird population, necessitating drastic measures to correct the problem.

And the rest, as they say, is history… But how much of the *Dune* series was preconceived, and how much written in response to the success of the first novel? “The *Dune* trilogy was one book in my

head. Parts of the second two were written before I'd really finished *Dune* itself. I'm not absolutely sure, but I know that the last chapter was not rewritten. But it's ancient history to me now and I'd have to think hard about it before I could reconstruct it." But the fourth novel, *God-Emperor of Dune*, had a somewhat different impetus behind it: "Leto II would not get out of my head", he said, laughing, "I had to do that book. It was just forced on me. One day I started making notes about him and realised that I was hooked," The *Dune* series is so famous, of course, that from the publicity attached to his name one might thing that he'd never written anything else, "I know. And I get people coming up to me and saying 'I've read your book'." But this doesn't worry him: "A book has to stand on its own. Various people have various favourites. I get people coming up to me and saying: 'Are you going to write any sort of the Jori X. McKie stories? Or any more Indian stories?' I even have people asking me If I'm going to write any more of *The Green Brain* type of book. In fact, I don't know of any particular book I've written where I haven't had somebody come up and say: 'That one was my favourite!' Fine. You can't be all things to all people."

His own favourites amongst his works are *Soul Catcher* and *The Santaroga Barrier*. "I wanted to do a particular kind of book (with the latter). I was infatuated with the idea of the utopia/dystopia dichotomy – one man's utopia is another's dystopia. I set out to write a book that would just about split the readership In half. I was sort of snickering to myself as I did it, (knowing that) about half of them would think I was writing about a utopia and about half would think I was writing about a dystopia. Just about half my fan mail (on it) says: 'Oh boy, I'd love to live there' and about half of it says: 'Good God, what an awful place!' Fine. That's exactly what I set out to do, you see, and it's very satisfying to design a book that way, to really set out to do that kind of story then have it do that."

And *Soul Catcher*? "It's about the collision between two mythologies:

the North West Coast American Indian and the Greek mythology of Western culture – the Greek-dominated mythology, I should say because it isn't totally Greek." He had a good understanding of that particular Indian culture because, as a boy, he had associated with some Indian children who had taught him how to make bows and spears and support himself off the land by hunting and fishing: but the book took him a long time to write. The first version "had the same title. It was about the North West Coast Indians and had similar characterisation, but it wasn't the same story at all. Part of the blockage was pride. I knew I was the definitive expert on these particular Indians because of the way I had been raised with them. I had written this book – it was completed – and then I had this experience at the University of Washington 'plunge' where I was on the staff. That week I had to have the 'plunge' done to me, so that I had the same experience the students did. We had to bid for these little block sets that you built toy houses out of; they were like Lincoln Logs or erector sets, but they were all wood. One of them constructed an apartment house, one constructed a two-flat building, another one was a split-level suburban. and another one was a farm house. We were supposed to bid on which ones we wanted and were supposed to put them together as a team, five or six people on a team, but not speaking. It was billed to us as a psychological experiment, and in fact there was a person from the University Psychological Department to oversee each assembly effort to make sure we didn't talk, that we did it only with gestures and so on. We were told that if we built it correctly, we'd get our money back, which wasn't much – two or three dollars at the most for the most expensive one. We were supposed to have an hour to do it and they gave us fifty minutes. They then condemned every one; we got none of our money back. So we went into the common room, feeling kind of put upon, and were told that the staff had taken all the money and gone out and bought beer and candy pissed it all off. God, were we mad! It was a trick pulled on us, you see. Then they said: 'You're angry now. This just happened to you once. It happens to Indians

every day of their lives.' And all I could think about at that instant was, Oh my God! That awful book! That hideous, terrible book! I went here that night and I burned every bit of it in the fireplace, every scrap of it was gone. Then I set down and rewrote the whole thing in three months. And it just seemed to write itself, it just came out." So there was a certain anger about the Indian predicament behind his when he wrote the second version? "There wasn't so much an anger as a sense that I understood the Indian predicament. And when I wrote the second one it wasn't anger either, but i *knew* I understood it then. I appear to have been extremely successful with the Indian culture. In fact, I've had some really interesting feedback. An American Indian leader, a very famous name (you'd recognise it, but I'm not at liberty to use it), at a tribal conference in South Dakota, got up and slammed a copy of *Soul Catcher* down on the table and said: 'Why does it have to be left to a white science fiction writer to tell what it feels like to be an Indian?' He was trying to whip them into realising that they should be writing of their experiences. I felt it was quite a compliment."

He once received a rather sore bizarre compliment from another source in respect of the Gowachin legal system outlined in *The Dosadi Experiment*. "I was at the A.A.A.S. meeting in Washington, D.C. and a government attorney recognised me in the elevator at the Sheraton and informed me that the American Bar Association had appointed a three-man committee to examine the Gowachin legal system and make a comparison to see if an alien legal system could give us any insights into our own!" The recollection make him laugh – as well it might, for all he had done was take the existing Western legal system and invert it.

He has collaborated with other authors a few times in his life, in one instance on the building of a houseboat on San Francisco Bay with Poul Anderson and Jack Vance. "And while we were there, pounding nails and cutting wood and whatnot, we decided we would

plot a story together. And we were going to write it together because we thought it would be fun to support our houseboat habit with a story we wrote while we doing the building. Then Poul got interested in something else. Jack likewise, and they shoved it off onto me and said ‘Go do it!’ So I did and it’s called ‘The Primitives’. The essence of it is that the actual Stone Age artisans were women – they were the ones who shaped the spearheads and the axe-heads and made the artefacts because they were home around the cane fire while the men were out hunting. The problem of the story is that they have what is called the Mars Diamond, the biggest diamond in all of history, only it's the most complex diamond ever discovered as far as cutting is concerned. They're afraid to cut it. Finally, it’s stolen, and the thieves have a captive – a man whose family has a time machine. So they get this idea of going back in time and getting a primitive who really has a feel for the stone and can cut it. She is brought forward in time to do this and is left alone with it, and she makes a spearhead out of it.”

The story was originally to be written under the pseudonym of ‘Noah Arkwright’ and the name was saved for use in *God-Emperor of Dune* as the author of an imaginary text referred to in passing – and both of his would-be collaborators had already appeared in similar roles in *Dune,* as 'Holjance Vohnbrook' and 'Pander Dulson’, giving Vance the opportunity to get his own back in the ‘Demon Princes’ series by attributing one of his imaginary texts to a ‘Frerb Hankbert’. Less well-known than all this is the story behind Jack Vance's *To Live Forever*, which be and Herbert “plotted together in Mexico and then tossed a coin to see who would write.” More recently, and perhaps more fruitfully, there has been his collaboration with Bill Ransom on *The Jesus Incident.*

“Bill came to me and said he wanted me to do a sequel to *Destination: Void*. He had ideas about it – you could do this and you could do that and you could do this other thing. I was very heavily

pressed with deadlines at that moment and I didn't have time to do it, but I was talking to him about it – he's a very close friend – and I suddenly said: 'Hey, would you like to collaborate with me on doing a sequel?' And Bill said: 'God. I don't know. I don't know it we could work together.' And I said: 'I don't know either, but we could try it.' So we outlined a story, and that was fun, and before we knew it we were working together. I got in touch with my agent and talked to New York, who were a little queasy about it. They didn't know Bill Ransom, and there were other considerations. But I insisted that there be equal play on the names and that the contract be an equal split, because you don't write a collaboration and have one person be a second-class citizen. So we finally got our contract, and we started writing the story. Bill would do one chapter and I'd do the other, and so on. we were leapfrogging. Then we came back and rewrote each other to add uniformity of style, and even my wife Bev has trouble seeing which passages I wrote and which passages Bill wrote. But the spooky thing was that we began getting into each other's heads. In one instance, each of us introduced a character in succeeding chapters. Bill had the first chapter with this character in it and I had the second one. We named this character, gave her the same name, and these two chapters just dovetailed. We had no previous collaboration, no consultation on naming the character or the sequence. He came back at the end of the week on our regular Friday consultation and looked at it and both of us got spooked. And it happened not just once but several times – there were other coincidences that happened this way, all through the book. It was as though we were on some kind of wavelength. And when we'd finished the book and mailed it off to New York, Bill and I each broke a little finger." He laughed, then continued: "We're going to do another one this next winter (1981/82), a sequel to *The Jesus Incident*. This one we'll do a little differently because I've got another book to finish when I get back (from Australia) and I won't get at what Bill has done until the winter. We've plotted the story together, but Bill is taking off on his own and doing any number of things

according to the outline and the plot that we've developed. He's not completing the book and he won't have it all fleshed out, (but) we work well together. We enjoy the same things. In fact, Bev complains and says: 'You're always laughing up there and I want to know that you're laughing about!'" He refused to be drawn further on the matter of this sequel, however: "I don't talk about work in progress, mainly because you use the same energies to talk about the work that you use to write it, and you want to save that energy for the paper. That's really good advice, the best advice I ever had. If there are any would-be writers around, tell then this, because I've seen writers who tell their best friends the story and you never see the story. And that's a waste."

From which statements it's obvious that he's writing the books he most enjoys – but does he write more for himself than for an audience, or does he write for a particular group of readers? "I have a kind of amorphous sense of an audience out there and I really care about that audience, I really do. I want then to be entertained, I want to give them the frosting on the cake. I want all these good experiences to come out in it. I sort of see myself as the *jongleur* who cones into the castle to sing for his supper, telling about the other castle down the highway. And, my God, people pay at for it. What a marvelous thing!" But, considering the size of his audience and the enormous popularity of his work, does it disappoint him that there has been (in the words of the Nicholls Encyclopedia of SF) "remarkably little critical analysis of his work"? The answer, it seems, is no. "It doesn't bother me, really doesn't bother me. There are some among my contemporaries who *are* bothered by that in their on work and are also bothered by the failure of establishment literati to give them the status they feel they desire. I think this was Kurt Vonnegut's problem. I know damn well it was Bob Silverberg's problem because he said so. My own approach to this is that it's a waste of energy to bother with that. Do your thing. And as long as you're enjoying it, do it!"

Apart from which, he has little care for the recent academic interest in SF: “I kind of have a leaning towards keeping science fiction In the gutter where it belongs,” he said, laughing, “It’s an emotional leaning, I think we have a lot of fun with it, you see. In addition to having fun, I think I'm prodding the guy next to me and saying, ‘Hey, the king's naked!’ So what’s his view of the purpose of SF in general? “Well, to entertain. To ask the questions that aren't being asked anywhere else. They're fair game for us. What if the ecology breaks down? What if this kind of society develops? Or what if we get a particularly obtrusive police state – the *Nineteen Eighty-Four* thing? None of these stories. I believe, prevent those evolutionary or devolutionary processes, but they sure as hell alert us to what's happening.” But he's basically an optimist: “I would like to believe that there will be human beings millions of years from now, enjoying life the way we enjoy it or to the extent that they're capable of enjoying it then. Alive *and* enjoying it, you see.”

And, after all these years and so many false starts, is he still optimistic that a film version of *Dune* will one day grace our cinema screens? The answer is yes, more optimistic than ever: a major studio has allocated a budget of $40 million, pre-production work Is in progress and, at the time we were interviewing him, crews were out scouring the world for suitable locations. “We have a director – David Lynch, the one who did *Eraserhead* and *The Elephant Man*. I am absolutely delighted with the choice. I don t know of a director who would be more pleasing to me – he’s a fan, and he wants to do *Dune!”* And his own position regarding the film? “I am in the contract technical advisor. Your guess as to what that means is probably as good as mine, but I do have input. They listen to me. and they listen with attention. I listen to the, with respect and they listen to me with respect, which is a nice way to approach this. And I understand the difficulties of translating the written word – the page – onto the screen.” After all, “when you stop and think about it, the cheapest

set-building in the world is in your imagination. (But) they have to be able to build a real thing that will look real up there on the screen so you'll look at it and say, Yes! That's Arrakis!That's a worm, that's an ornithopter." Despite which, he does have some worries that the finished film will look somewhat different from his own conception of his own world, "but at this point they're minor, because there really is an effort to meet that general norm. (That is,) I'm sure that in your head there's a slightly different view of *Dune* than mine, as I'm sure there would be if we went around this room. But there is norm in there somewhere and there really is a desire on the part of the production team to meet it, for economic reasons if for no others – if people believe they've seen *Dune*, then they're going to spread the word. But beyond that, let see re-assert that I don't doubt at all that David Lynch really wants to do this, and he's a fan."

One amongst many, clearly, and certainly a better choice as a director than the one who once said that he was particularly interested in the possibilities of an incestuous relationship between Paul and his mother…(!) How long the film will take to reach fruition no one can yet say, but Frank Herbert will certainly be around to see it (and, perhaps, see it spawn as many sequels as his own original novel) – full of life and energy, he clearly has many more books yet to write.

Waldenbooks Tapes, 1983

A Recorded Interview, Interview of Frank Herbert and David Lynch, 1983

HERBERT: We do nasty things to our leaders. We shoot them on the streets of Dallas and hang them on pieces of wood at Golgotha. We fondly say that in the United States we separate church and state. That's an asinine statement. I am a political analyst, and I've really never left journalism. I'm writing about the current scene. The metaphors are there. I'm writing about the political ecology, the religious ecology, the social ecology, and the physical ecology of our world. And I think you do not separate any one part of this from the other. You don't separate the mind and body and understand the human being.

INTERVIEWER: Waldenbooks is proud to have the opportunity to speak with author Frank Herbert and director David Lynch. David Lynch is not only the director of *Dune,* the motion picture, but also the author of the screenplay. And right beside me is Frank Herbert, the author of the book, and, of course, all of the subsequent books which have become so immensely popular.

The first question I wanted to ask of the film-maker. Did you feel threatened by the fact that so many readers had seen *Dune* so many times before they'll have the opportunity to come into the

theater to see your *Dune*?

LYNCH: You've got to be either stupid or crazy, you know, to do something like this, and I live in fear 24 hours a day.

INTERVIEWER: So you're definitely cognizant of the stature?

LYNCH: Yes.

HERBERT: Why don't you me the question because I've seen the film.

LYNCH: Somebody has to do it, right? And someone had to do it, and I was…. the day I finished reading the book, I met with Dino in his office, and I was so high from finishing the book, and so thrilled with what I had read, I signed on. And I didn't really know that it was going to be three and a half of this type of year, but I'll let Frank tell you what he thinks.

INTERVIEWER: Dino De Laurentiis came to you or brought you to *Dune,* the project, before you were even really fully aware…. ?

LYNCH: I had never read… never even heard the word *Dune*.

HERBERT: He thought it was June.

LYNCH: I thought he said June.

INTERVIEWER: I do want to ask Frank the question about the film, what he thinks of it. And that is kind of a loaded question because Frank is a film-maker himself, something I didn't know until today. So you're not working with someone who is not aware…

HERBERT: Documentaries. Different things.

INTERVIEWER: …but, you're aware of the process, of the visual medium, and you're happy with the film?

HERBERT: Well, I get asked this specific question a lot of times. If the settings, the scenes, that I saw in David's film match my original imagination, the things that I projected in my imagination. I must tell you that some of them do precisely, some of them don't, and some of them are better, which is what you would expect of artists such as David and Tony Masters. I'm delighted with that. I mean, why not take it and improve on it visually? As far as I'm concerned the film is a visual feast. I would love to have some of the scenes as stills to

frame and have around me. They're beautiful.

INTERVIEWER: So you feel there was a synergy between the two of you: the director/screen-writer and the creator of the concept?

HERBERT: Synergy? You mean the sum is more than the parts?

INTERVIEWER: That's right. That something better came out of the two of you working together?

HERBERT: I think so.

INTERVIEWER: What was Frank's participation? I am asking David this question.

LYNCH: I signed on to do *Dune*. When I was working on the *Elephant Man*, I worked with Christopher Dvorn and Eric Bergman, and we tried to be true to the essence of, you know, the elephant man. And in *Dune*, I try to be true to the essence of Frank's book, which is not an easy thing because there are so many different lines and so many different things swimming about. It's picking and choosing and condensing and, you know, all sorts of things. So Frank's contribution was the book and his support from day one all the way through to now. He's always available for questions, and

he's read almost every draft (I did seven drafts). And, he has allowed me to do my thing, and his book is packed full with these, what I call, seed ideas. There's the big ideas, but there's so many little seed ideas, and those he let me sprout and run with. That was the thrill for me because there are things in the movie that were sparked by Frank, but they were allowed to grow out. I think it'll be neat for people who have read the book, they'll see a difference, but it is true to the essence of Frank's ideas.

HERBERT: The film begins as the book begins, and it ends essentially as the book ends. And I hear my dialog all the way through it, not just my dialog, but there's lots of other dialog. I had the funny sensation of watching the rough cut, not exactly too rough recently, of some of the cuts, the things that are not in there, of feeling that they'd happened just off stage or that we'd gone beyond them, but they'd happened, that we hadn't really lost them. There are only two scenes that I missed in the film, but I know why they were cut. They were pets of mine, and you shouldn't have any pets.

LYNCH: No, they were pets of mine, too, but I know which scenes they are. Those are the things… that's the trouble. The film right now is 2 hours and 20 minutes, and it rolls along gangbusters. But certain scenes that Frank and I both liked, I think, would have stopped the film.

INTERVIEWER: Was this merely a stroke of luck that two artists from two different mediums, obviously two sensitive artists, didn't really experience any substantial difficulty in molding or contributing to the production of this film?

LYNCH: On my part I consider it pretty lucky, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you expect the license that Frank gave you?

LYNCH: I met Frank three and a half years ago when I first signed on. I didn't know who or what I was going to be meeting. I had seen his picture, this bearded guy on his books, right?

HERBERT: Guru author.

LYNCH: Yeah, so, but it's turned out to be like… well Frank is an idea man. They're the best kind of people in my book around. Ideas are…. everybody, you know, feeds of them, but very few people can catch them. They're out there, but they're so elusive. You have to be kind of sneaky and sneak up on them and capture them. Frank captures these fantastic ideas, and I really respect that.

INTERVIEWER: Frank, you are obviously satisfied with the result. You said so many times.

HERBERT: Yes, very much so. But the funny thing happened. Dino

called me. I didn't know David from Adam's offer. And he called me and he said that he had hired David Lynch to do the…. to direct the film of *Dune*. This was after a couple of – well I think they would have been disasters. David knows why. So, I said: "David who?" and he said: "David Lynch". He said "*Elephant Man*." And I hadn't seen *Elephant Man*. So I went out and got a tape of it and played it on my video, and I had this funny gut sensation we had the guy who could do it. When you're doing a film from the written word, you're translating into a different language. It is as though you were translating from English to Swahili. The visual language is a different language, and there was such subtlety and such beauty in the *Elephant Man*. I've seen it now about eight times, I think, and I get something new from it each time, something peripheral or something right in the mainstream that was done visually as a visual metaphor. I've never told David this, but this is true. This is what happened to me. I had this gut sensation: We've got him, you know, the guy who can do it.

INTERVIEWER: I'm glad we're having this talk. David, did you as a film-maker… I think by anyone's estimation *Dune* was written very visually as a piece of literature, visual description, visualization of that is very immediate. Did that help you in your translation to the screen?

LYNCH: Well, like I said, I really in a way forget a lot of the book now because there have been so many drafts of the screenplay in between, but some things I really think, in your mind, you think that Frank described things. But when you go searching, some things are described of course, but a lot of things are left to your imagination, even in the book. And, um…

HERBERT: That was deliberate I might add.

LYNCH: …and you get a feeling, and your mind takes over from there. A lot of times, you go searching for descriptions of things, they weren't there or I realized that I was picturing something and I was falling in love with what I was picturing. Like I said, Frank allowed me to go with my interpretation in how things looked, and because of that I was able to…. my interpretation is one thing. And then I started working with Tony and we went through two or three different steps into sort of the stratosphere of interpretation and we got clicking on four really nifty different worlds and the look of each one.

INTERVIEWER: So, the motion picture is truly an entity onto itself. If you love the book, you'll love the movie picture even more because it takes on a new dimension?

LYNCH: I can see how everyone who reads the book is going to interpret it, and their interpretation is not mine, but I have to… it has to go through me as the director like a filter, and things pass through me and it's not going to be other people's interpretation. Some people may love it, and some people say it's not what they pictured and they would be disappointed. You know, that's the way it is.

INTERVIEWER: Again, the book being so visual, some people… anyone who has read has been there before.

LYNCH: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: What about the tools that you had to employ as a film-maker, especially a modern film-maker in this day and age? What did you do?

LYNCH: Every technique known to film-making has been used on this picture, except for stop-motion, strangely enough. And, so, I've learned a tremendous amount of technical things. We built over about 80 sets in what amounted to sixteen sound stages down in Mexico, travelled all over the world, Raffaella and I, Raffaella De Laurentiis is the producer, first looking for locations and finally going to Mexico. I've seen actors for this picture all over the world. And people in this film are from all over the world. The crew is from all over the world.

At one point there was 1,700 people on the crew, and that's a huge amount of people. And sometimes I'd turned around on the set, and there would be 600 people, and they are not extras, you know, crew people, or visitors, or camera crews on the set, so it has been a strange experience, but a huge, fantastic experience.

HERBERT: I want to add a little bit to this. A strange thing happened at the wrap party down in Mexico. At least a dozen of the actors and actresses who were in it came up to me and said, individually, more or less the same thing: that they were sorry it was over. They had

such a good time.

INTERVIEWER: So it wasn't necessarily a grueling experience that drove everyone insane?

LYNCH: No, we were really together. It was a great experience. And we were in a foreign world, and we were in Mexico City, which is…. I will always feel is the perfect place to make *Dune* because *Dune* is a foreign world and four foreign worlds. And if I was making it in Arizona, it would be too normal. Mexico City was just the right atmosphere, the right mood to kind of let your…. just it was help your mind get out there, you know, and to…. *dune*.

HERBERT: There was a certain kind of rapport between the producer and the director. We had our disagreements, but they weren't major disagreements, they weren't shouting disagreements or anything like that. If you could explain your point, people listened to you. The only time that I objected to something that was going to be done, David and Raffaella and everybody else listened to me and they didn't do the thing I didn't want done.

LYNCH: I can't remember what it was.

HERBERT: You weren't going to kill off…

LYNCH: Oh yes that's right. Yes, yeah… yeah right, exactly.

HERBERT: That’s the only thing I ever objected to.

INTERVIEWER: Did they kill them off then?

HERBERT: No, yeah, they did.

LYNCH: But in the proper way.

HERBERT: In the proper way, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So we'll see that when we go to the motion picture?

HERBERT: You’ll see an authentic scene that is from the book, very poignant.

INTERVIEWER: Who’s going to be killed?

HERBERT: Let’s don't tell them.

INTERVIEWER: So there are two more *Dune* projects, potential *Dune* projects already in the works?

LYNCH: In the works. I have started writing on the script to *Dune II*. It needs a lot more work, and then I'll show it to Frank, and I'll see what he thinks.

INTERVIEWER: You’ll be a tough audience then?

HERBERT: Tougher than hell.

INTERVIEWER: Now, it is interesting that Frank didn't do the screenplays for *Dune*. Why did that happen?

HERBERT: Well, I did a screenplay, and it was awful.

LYNCH: I never read Frank's script. I don't believe it was awful.

HERBERT: It was too long. It lacked the proper visual metaphors. I was too close to the book to be able to see it as a film. David didn't have that problem. Working on this film with David has taught me a great deal about taking the printed word, a screenplay and making it into a film. Now I feel confident to do a screenplay. I don't know if I can do a screenplay of one of my own books, but, yes, I can. I'm doing it.

INTERVIEWER: So you have definitely learned from each other in this experience a great deal?

HERBERT: I would say so, yeah.

LYNCH: Mmmhmm.

INTERVIEWER: And that would make the next two pictures something that you would look forward to?

LYNCH: Oh yeah, I look forward to it. I'm a little bit, well we all are. I'm a little bit duned out right now.

HERBERT: Duned-in we say.

INTERVIEWER: Three and a half years you've been on this project.

LYNCH: That's right. Three and a half years.

INTERVIEWER: That's a long time. But the results are, from what everyone says, well worth the effort. What, and that leads me to the last question I want to ask David as a film-maker… have you thought of how the public is going to respond to this? In other words, as you made the film, have you had a place in your mind where you've been contemplating what the response will be? How people will react to what you are doing?

LYNCH: Well, I've thought about… a lot about the films I've loved, and what it was. It wasn't… It was an experience that I had while watching them that I couldn't get anywhere else. I never got it anywhere else. Ever. And I would so gladly pay my five dollars to have that experience. And it took me… the films that I loved took me to another place, even if it was twenty years ago or present day, but another place, and gave me an experience, and I think that is what I hope *Dune* will do. And it's four different worlds and a trip through them that you can't experience anywhere else. Ever.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much, David, for sharing your thoughts and background on the film with Waldenbooks.

LYNCH: Thanks a million.

INTERVIEWER: Frank Herbert, every question that could have ever been asked of you has probably been asked.

HERBERT: Ask me a new one.

INTERVIEWER: [Laughs] I'm gonna go back to the beginning and maybe a little beyond to the real genesis of *Dune* and where it's started for Frank Herbert, the author. Not necessary where it began as a project, as a book, but where it began for you, for Frank Herbert.

Well, I'm a history buff, and have been a history, buff since I was quite young. And while reading history, I got the idea that we had not looked at the messianic impulse in human society from a point of view that I knew could be developed. Reporting that this person came on the scene and these people followed and this is what happened, was kind of a journalistic approach to it. I didn't mind the you-are-there approach but I wanted was something that showed the impact of a messiah on history as the creator of a power structure, because inevitably no matter how good the messiah, other people enter the scene, other people are attracted to the power structure. I think that the idea of power corrupting, an absolute

power corrupting absolutely, is not on the mark, does not hit it. I think what happens is that power attracts the corruptible.

INTERVIEWER: That's an interesting concept. That's almost the antithesis, a reverse of the process that is commonly accepted.

HERBERT: I think this is why great power centers such as the Kremlin, the Pentagon, Quai d'Orsay, Sandhurst become essentially cesspools really, because they get so many people there who want power for the sake of power, and it's my estimation of it that a high percentage of these people are certifiable. You get real nuts. This is why you get people for example going to Guyana and drinking Kool-Aid because the errors of the leader are amplified by the number who follow without question. That was the beginning. I wanted to do a messiah story that explored this.

INTERVIEWER: The way that you perceived power structures at that time, and I want to make a statement about it, is this, that you mentioned just a moment ago, is that a messiah can create or develop a power structure?

HERBERT: It occurs around the messiah.

INTERVIEWER: That's what I guess, my question is – does a messiah, walk in sometimes even inadvertently, to a culture or

society who has already built a power structure?

HERBERT: Every messiah I studied in history was a reformer and for good reason. Jesus wanted to reform the Revenaid. He had a belief that it had become corrupted. The biblical movement had become corrupted. The same is true of Mohammed. He was a reformer. Zoroaster was a reformer.

Each of these individuals obviously was charismatic. Charismatic leaders are dangerous because people don't question them. They see the obvious thing that the charismatic leader is saying that this needs reforming. So they fall in the line behind the charismatic leader. And as I say, even if the charismatic leader is absolutely right and perfect in all of his judgements, eventually you get a power structure which accumulates, like filings accumulating in a magnet, all around the polarized places in this power structure.

INTERVIEWER: So the power structure does evolve as a result of the messiahs activities?

HERBERT: That's right. But just not by the messiahs activities. It evolves because of the way people respond to a charismatic leader. So it's part of the forms of our society,

INTERVIEWER: So in the case of Jesus, you mentioned a moment ago, weren't the Hebrews waiting for a messiah long before?

HERBERT: Oh yes, the messianic myth was there in their history…

INTERVIEWER: It preceded his arrival.

HERBERT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Of course he never really exemplified the messiah.

HERBERT: There was some question whether he said that he was the messiah. Buddha was a reformer and Jesus was a reformer. In each instance you have an individual on the scene, a charismatic leader, who sees something that needs fixing. There's a "repair job" necessary.

INTERVIEWER: Sometimes it's obvious to everyone?

HERBERT: Yes, and a lot of people say: Yes, you are absolutely right Mr Charismatic Leader and we will follow you.

INTERVIEWER: There's a broad truth to anything that's said, so it's

easy to follow.

HERBERT: Yes. And then you get a movement going.

INTERVIEWER: This is sequential? These things happen…

HERBERT: But they don't just happen because of the charismatic leader, they happen because the society picks up on it.

INTERVIEWER: But has the society have created a need or a void for the charismatic leader before that individual arrived?

HERBERT: Something had occurred in the society that the charismatic leader latches on to.

INTERVIEWER: The stage is set prior to the messiahs arrival?

HERBERT: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Do societies truly create the messiahs from within?

HERBERT: Oh, I think so. I think that we kind of create a vortex in which the messiah is sucked.

People ask me if I am starting a cult and I really avoid that like the plague. I don't want to be a cult leader. I am not your guru. You be your own guru.

INTERVIEWER: Is that why you shaved your beard?

HERBERT: This is the new Frank Herbert.

INTERVIEWER: [Laughs]

HERBERT: We do nasty things to our leaders. We shoot them on the streets of Dallas and hang them on pieces of wood at Golgotha. The whole structural form out of which charismatic leaders evolve, that’s the thing that I was addressing.

INTERVIEWER: But the process starts and you were referring a moment ago to what happens next. The leader evolves. The leader emerges and then things begin to happen.

HERBERT: Remember that *Dune*, *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune* were one book in my head. And *Dune Messiah* was a pivotal book which turns over the whole picture, changes your view of history. This is why a lot of people have trouble with it, you see. Because I created a charismatic leader. You'd follow Paul for all the right reasons. He was honest, trustworthy, loyal to his people, up to the point of giving his life for them if they wanted it.

INTERVIEWER: And the response to him?

HERBERT: The response to him was to follow him slavishly, to not question him. I think, for example, that John Kennedy was the most dangerous president we had in recent years. Not because I think the man was evil, I think he was a great guy and I'd enjoy drinking with him and have playing cards with him, but because people did not question him.

INTERVIEWER: So you are obviously a proponent of questioning authority.

HERBERT: Oh, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: You consider yourself an iconoclast?

HERBERT: Indeed.

INTERVIEWER: With the relationship between the messiah and the followers, again, I want to go back to the process. It all begins well and it all seems very good…

HERBERT: Sweetness and light.

INTERVIEWER: And then something happens. Something begins to evolve.

HERBERT: A new structure evolves and people take it over. Other people get into the act.

INTERVIEWER: So they drain power away from the messiah?

HERBERT: Of course. It is delegated.

INTERVIEWER: And how does that happen?

HERBERT: It happens out of a structural force that is in the society. I think one of the best examples we have that in recent times, we can look at with a certain degree of historical clarity, is what happened in the Soviet Union. The October Revolution had real evils to address. The Czarist regime was one of the most evil regimes that this world has ever seen.

INTERVIEWER: The oppression was obvious?

HERBERT: Yeah. Marx and the others came in, into that vortex, and took it over. Now what has evolved out of that? They have evolved a Bureaucratic Aristocracy. Which is almost a precise copy of the Czarist regime.

INTERVIEWER: This might have contributed to the fall of Nikita Khrushchev. He was the last singular identity, as a human being, that I recall, in the Soviet Union. Since then the power has filtered down…

HERBERT: It defused.

INTERVIEWER: So that is the process that will take place in any similar situation?

HERBERT: I think so.

INTERVIEWER: Is it human nature?

HERBERT: I don't think it's human nature. Well, human nature is involved in it, of course, but I think it is an essential part of the forms that people develop and call government.

INTERVIEWER: Which they create for themselves.

HERBERT: Yeah. It's kind of an evolutionary process, I believe that has come out of tribal forms. Feudatory is a tribe. So we have this marvelous historical example, it happened in our lifetimes, in the Soviet Union. We have seen them reconstitute the Czarist regime.

INTERVIEWER: Without an individual on which to put this.

HERBERT: Yeah. but all the Bureaucracy is there, you see. With even some of the same names – the same titles I mean.

INTERVIEWER: So Paul, in *Dune*,…

HERBERT:…is caught in this kind of a vortex.

INTERVIEWER: Now, did Paul come to, as society seeking that messiah?

HERBERT: He came to a society that was prepared to welcome a messiah.

INTERVIEWER: So his reception was favorable?

HERBERT: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: And he was launched not only on his own initiative and ambition, if he had that…

HERBERT: The necessity of his decision making were obvious.

INTERVIEWER: And society lifted him quite willingly to where he ended up?

HERBERT: That's correct.

INTERVIEWER: Everything else that you created – you were described once as a world-maker, let me rephrase that, maybe a world dreamer. You obviously had to create this world of *Dune*. It began with Paul, it began with this messianic impulse, this study. This interest that you had as an individual, as a writer, and then the rest. How did it grow outwards from that?

HERBERT: The first thing you have to do is to create the messiah, the charismatic leader that people will follow for all of the correct reasons. They can justify everything they do to follow him. And you accept it as a reader. Then we have domicile, which is the evolution power structure and how devolution begins to set in and you get the cynicism arising and you get a turnover of things that were good in *Dune* that now you get a different look at. You get to look at them from a different angle.

INTERVIEWER: Does the perspective change?

HERBERT: Yes, the perspective does change, the angle of view changes.

Prescience, which figures so prominently in Dune, and I am talking to a society which believes that prediction is a great thing. But if I

were to give you an absolute prediction, John, of everything that is going to happen to you, from this moment to your death, your whole life would be instant replay and an utter bore.

INTERVIEWER: And yet, that's your role.

HERBERT: Yeah, and that's the thing people think they want. But what they really want, is they want to know what U.S. Steel is going to do around the big board next week and will she or won't she and give me a couple of winners at Hialeah while you're at it, you see.

INTERVIEWER: But isn't that tremendous response you have received from your writing based upon that eagerness, people wanting to know? People wanting a window to the future?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. But you see, it's *the* future that is in question. The value of surprise gets thrown out the window if you believe in absolute prescience.

INTERVIEWER: Now you've created a future, as we said, you're a world maker, a world dreamer. Why did you create Dune? Why that planet? Why such an arid lifeless place?

HERBERT: Well, it's a testing place for one thing. And all the great

religions that we know about came out of the wilderness. So I created kind of an amplified wilderness.

INTERVIEWER: How much of your work, of your writing, of all your writing you have done, the science-fiction writing you have done, how much is a reflection of you and your beliefs as you perceive this planet and our social structures?

HERBERT: I think we have to reform our social structures. I really do. And I have certain metaphors in the *Dune* books that I deliberately chose to shake people's views on the forms. For example the worms. The worms are the monster, the mindless monster in the depth, that guard the pearl of great price. It's the unconscious animal, it's the black bull of the corrida.

INTERVIEWER: That limits your options of how to deal with it.

HERBERT: Yeah, it is the welling of violence that comes out of humankind.

INTERVIEWER: So in describing or creating a wilderness you're exposing elements, again I go to the phrase human nature, elements of the human condition. I noticed that it's very humanoid. The future remains quite humanoid.

HERBERT: I wanted real people that you'd identify with.

INTERVIEWER: And also that they respond, in many ways, in a very consistent fashion to what we experience now. There is a tremendous amount of conflict in your writing. Many things are resolved by conflict. Now is that a prediction of the future or is that then, as you said, the metaphor, a reflection of the now?

HERBERT: That's the way I read history.

[Note: There might be something missing in the interview, since the next sentence contradicts the previous one.]

HERBERT: If you read history, it's not the way human begins have done things since we began chiseling our words in stone.

INTERVIEWER: And as it has been then it will continue to be?

HERBERT: Unless we change the forms. I don't want to breed out or condition out of humankind the competitiveness because the our universe can throw surprises at us despite our predictions, despite our best predictions. And we have to be able to respond to this

universe with all our options open. We don't close off any options. If we can respond non-violently that of course is preferable but if all that's left to us is violence then we do not close off that options.

INTERVIEWER: You seem to be implying that we have the ability to change a legacy of the ages that we can actually attempt and perhaps succeed at something that mankind has failed to accomplish since the beginning of mankind. Do you really have that much faith in the resiliency and the elasticity of the human form?

HERBERT: Yes, I think we are the best equipped survival animal that this planet has ever produced. I don't depend just on rationality, I depend on the need to survive, on the urge to survive, on the desiree to survive as a species. This is behind a lot of what I write. It pleases me to think that 20,000 years in the future, 20 million years in the future, there will be human beings around enjoying life the way I enjoy life.

INTERVIEWER: The World Without War Council?

HERBERT: Oh yes. As a member of the collegium of the World Without War Council I have bowed out of active participation, although not out of belief in that kind of work. I think that we can't address this problem of war unless we address our own bureaucratic tendencies. Our tendencies to create a structure, such as the World Without War Council, which then becomes much more interested in maintaining its own form, its own identity, the ongoing

need for its services, rather than to create an organization of form which puts itself out of business.

INTERVIEWER: How does this dedication to peace manifest itself in your writing?

HERBERT: Showing people some alternatives. Showing them the consequences of violence. Displaying alternative forms. Showing them how the old patterns repeat themselves.

INTERVIEWER: You describe… well, you have many emperors in your writing. Now as a reflection of the 20th century, for example: what do you see as the preferable leadership, a style of leadership, an evolution of leadership?

HERBERT: Well, my own response politically is that I vote against anybody in office. [Laughs] I think that we had the examples of how to deal with political power and that is to give it very briefly.

INTERVIEWER: Why is it that in your writing, when there are 1,000 emperors or when leadership is broken down and bisected, you refers, I think, that as the Dark Ages…

HERBERT: All I am saying there, John, is that the Aristocratic forms

repeat themselves. Aristocracy is a repetitive structure in our world.

INTERVIEWER: More of a bad thing, doesn't improve?

HERBERT: That's what I am saying, yes.

INTERVIEWER: You talk about religion, and you take perspective…

HERBERT: Another power structure.

INTERVIEWER: Very much so. You also talk about the inside and the outside, about creating a need for your own leadership. How is that manifested in our own society?

HERBERT: We see organizations develop, which work unconsciously, for the most part, to maintain those conditions which require their services.

INTERVIEWER: And it's subconscious?

HERBERT: I think mostly unconscious, yes. But all of the structures, these organizations, become much more career-oriented, much more orientated on maintaining the need for their own services and their ongoing participation in power.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a natural process, for example that bureaucracy begets bureaucracy?

HERBERT: I think it's self-seeding, yes.

INTERVIEWER: And then, how can that be broken? Or can it be broken of its own will?

HERBERT: I think you need to break it by bringing the final judgment, the final determination, on who holds power back into the hands of what we like to call the grass roots. I would like to see in the United States, for example, some real democracy. I'd like to see review committees, with enormous power, very short term tenure, maybe one year, small budgets and never able to serve again on such a committee, only once in a lifetime. I would like to see such review committees called in to action automatically given certain conditions, declaration of war for example. At a local level if a school board is going to spend, say 200,000 dollars. Automatically, a review committee called into being. And called at random from the polls of the people who voted in the previous election. And given the power of life and death over what the school wants to do. Will they always act perfectly? No, they won't. But if they only have tenure for

a year then you can go at it again. And you will go at it having learned something from the actions of the previous review committee.

INTERVIEWER: Is this an extension of the existing set of checks and balances that we currently have?

HERBERT: It's another check and balance I'd like to reinstall into our democratic system.

INTERVIEWER: But much more localized?

HERBERT: On, not only localized. I'd like to have at the local level, at the county level, at the state level and at the federal level.

INTERVIEWER: In broad terms, are you supportive of defusing a large centralized power source?

HERBERT: Of yes, on the broad terms, I am. I think we need certain central powers but I think we have to limit the tenure of however holds that power. And severely limited and so it's arbitrary. For example, I think that we ought to have one term senators and maybe two term congressmen and that we ought to have a one term president. Maybe give him six years. And that senators have to be

four years and one term. And congressmen maybe two terms, two years.

INTERVIEWER: Wouldn't that much activity, coming and going in political office, create a volatile state of affairs for our society?

HERBERT: I think that it would demand that the society keep its eye on what is happening. And that's what we don't have now.

INTERVIEWER: In *Dune*, going back to the book, going back to how that is reflected in your writing, you have the tribal entity, the Fremen, responding as a tribe, responding primitively.

HERBERT: But in quite sophisticated [42:40 ???], too.

INTERVIEWER: What effect would your suggestions have on a society? I would obviously not tend to become more primitive and more basic in its decision making. It would have to become much more enlightened, I would think.

HERBERT: It would become much more aware of what's going on. I had a senior bureaucrat in the school system in the state of Washington, when I expanded this idea to him he said: „You think some damn housewife could understand the complexities of what

the school board has to do?“ And my response immediately is: „Yes. You bet I think a housewife would understand them. She would understand these things out of necessity.“ I think, if you throw the responsibility, the full responsibility, on to people they rise to the occasion.

INTERVIEWER: Back to Frank Herbert, as the writer, obviously very politically aware and tremendously sensitive to political and social issues. That was the basis then for *Dune*? For all of *Dune*?

HERBERT: Remember, before writing *Dune* I was the speech writer for a United States senator with two offices in Washington D.C. I've been right on the inside of the apple. So I know what's going on back there. I am a political animal. And I really never left journalism. I'm writing about the current scene. The metaphors were there. Writing about the political ecology, the religious ecology, the social ecology and the physical ecology of our world. And I think you do not separate any one part of this from the other. You don't separate mind and body and understand the human being and therefore you don't separate any of these elements and understated what's going on in our world.

We fondly say that in the United States we separate church and state. That's an asinine statement. There is nothing more emotional than religion. Nothing more emotionally demanding than religion because it is the promise of survival. You can't take that out of politics. You get heated emotions aroused. I am a political animal and that's what I am writing about. I am writing about the economic ecology, the politics of all of these things that influence our lives.

INTERVIEWER: The response that you get to your writing, the way that people mirror your writing back to you. Is it satisfactory?

HERBERT: Oh yes, people are thinking and asking interesting question because of what I write.

INTERVIEWER: You're impacting then your readers they way you want?

HERBERT: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: And you continue to?

HERBERT: I hope so. [Laughs]

INTERVIEWER: And you have a new book in the spring, called *Chapterhouse Dune?*

HERBERT: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Where is that going to take place?

HERBERT: The sixth *Dune* book and it begins with a Bene Gesserit planet which has been converted into another Dune. And it goes from there…

INTERVIEWER: Thank you vey much, Frank Herbert, for sharing your thoughts on *Dune*, your writings and sharing your thoughts on our world with Waldenbooks. We wish you the best of luck with the motion picture, *Dune*, soon to be released and look forward to *Chapterhouse Dune*.

Sources: *http://www.lynchnet.com/dune/duneint.html*

http://www.slashfilm.com/david-lynch-and-frank-herbert-discuss-dune/

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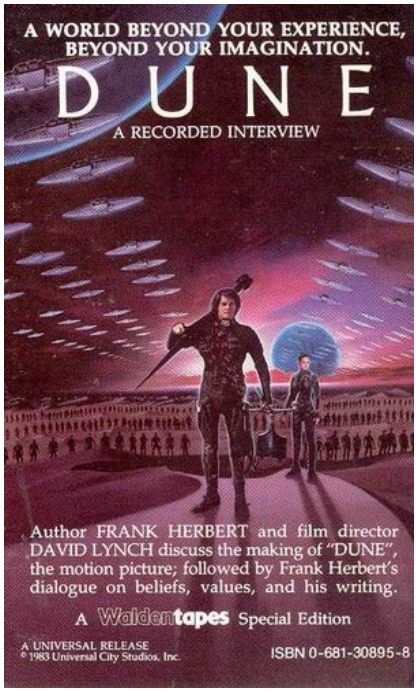
A WORLD BEYOND YOUR EXPERIENCE,
BEYOND YOUR IMAGINATION.
DUNE
A RECORDED INTERVIEW
Author FRANK HERBERT and film director DAVID LYNCH discuss the making of "DUNE", the motion picture; followed by Frank Herbert's dialogue on beliefs, values, and his writing.
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Starlog Magazine, 1983

by Chris Henderson, STARLOG MAGAZINE #66, 1983

Editor's Note: Frank Herbert is one of the most widely read and important authors of science fiction. His Dune *books are perhaps his most significant contribution, along with his steadfast refusal to back away from serious and controversial subject matter.* Starlog *caught up with the busy writer last September while he was in New York promoting his new novel,* The White Plague*.*

STARLOG: In total, how many attempts have there been to bring *Dune* to the screen?

HERBERT: Oh, wow…

STARLOG: Let's limit it to “major” attempts.

HERBERT: Two. Arthur P. Jacobs [producer of the *Planet of the Apes* series] was first. He had the bad taste to die without consulting me.

STARLOG: How far did his project go?

HERBERT: To a storyboard, not to a script. Then, there was Alejandro Jodorowsky [writer/director of *El Topo*], with a script and a storyboard which I am sure couldn't have been done in less than 10 hours.

STARLOG: You worked with Salvador Dali on that version.

HERBERT: Right. And Jodorowsky fired Dali because Salvador had the temerity to speak his own mind. Disagree or agree with the man, it was no reason to dump him as an artist. Alejandro's problem was that he had so many personal, emotional axes to grind – I used to kid him: “Well, I know what your problem is, Alejandro. There is no way to horsewhip the pope in this story.”

Now, the newest attempt is by David Lynch [director of *Eraserhead*, *The Elephant Man*]. They have a beautiful script. Believe me, it is good, about two hours, 10 minutes long, maybe. If they can translate that into cinematic form – and I don't see any reason they couldn't – you will see *Dune* on the screen.

The beautiful thing is the technique that David used to imply things; he doesn't go through delineating everything – he hits high points where details you might like to see, in the 10 hour Jodorowsky version were only implied. You don't need any more. You just go on

with the story thread of this movie.

STARLOG: How have you been involved in these three separate projects?

HERBERT: There was no involvement at all with Arthur Jacobs; none. I was asked to comment on Jodorowsky's storyboard and script, but before I could, that one just died in the water, and was never made. Then, Dino de Laurentiis came along and bought the original contract but did not have enough time to do a movie, so he had to come to me to renegotiate. And in that renegotiation, I specifically became a technical advisor on the film. They must bring me on the set whenever they get to principal photography. This doesn't mean that I have any absolute vote on what happens. And I really don't want that kind of vote because I'm not an expert moviemaker.

This is a translation job. I wouldn't pretend to be the person who should translate *Dune* from English into French. My French is execrable. It's the same with a movie; you go to the person who speaks “movie.” We found someone who really can; that's David. On the other hand, David listens to me. I had a lot of input, giving him the sense of the story, what I was doing and helping him to abbreviate it.

STARLOG: What do you think of David's work.

HERBERT: I'm an admirer; I like what he has done. I can see from his script that he has *Dune* in mind. David has said that he wants to make a film so that when people walk out of the theater, they will know they've seen *Dune*, and I think he can do it.

This won't be a comic book for the screen, but a story about people. These are people of a different kind in a different environment, which is, after all, the essence of science fiction. You couldn't shoot *Hurricane* in New York. It wouldn't translate, would it? The secret of science fiction is that it enables you to create different kinds of drama in ways that aren't available to you in any other medium.

That's what science fiction has going for it. Real serious science fiction dominating the screen, the same way it dominates the genre in print.

STARLOG: Do you see much hope for that happening?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. What we're into right now is the comic book and pulp magazine era of science-fiction movies. We are creating an audience, putting out the cliches that every science fiction fan knows, but that most of this new audience does not know. This was *Star Wars*' chief value. I could see the comic book attraction for a lot of the audience, but it brought in many more people who didn't know the first damn thing about science fiction. They liked that kind of black and white exposition, and so, they liked the film.

STARLOG: The timing was right for *Star Wars*. After nearly 15 years of downbeat, anti-hero films, here's a new “Errol Flynn” movie, which

takes its subject seriously – and captures an audience.

HERBERT: You're absolutely right, despite the fact that *Star Wars* reached into existing science

fiction and ripped-off everything in sight.

STARLOG: Aren't those same elements – previously used by Larry Niven, Doc Smith, Fred Pohl – just the conventions of science fiction?

HERBERT: Not just the conventions, but the cliches of science fiction. They aren't cliches to us on the inside, merely the devices used to tell an acceptable science fiction story.

Someone once asked me if I objected to finding “plasteel” in other science-fiction stories, and I said, “No.” “But you originated it!” And I said, “So?” Big deal, I originated it. So what? Now, it's a part of the genre, part of the business. You don't worry about things like that. And for making science fiction so identifiable, I think that *Star Wars* did us all a big favor.

STARLOG: Four hundred fifty million dollars in the box office does bring one an air of respectability.

HERBERT: Oh, yes.

STARLOG: Soon to be followed by a slew of imitators.

HERBERT: As everyone tries to do another one.

STARLOG: *Outland* – "*High Noon* in space" – or *Alien*.

HERBERT: "The Black Gang in space." Anyone who knows the first thing about what human beings will have to do in space travel, knows that you can not translate the tramp steamer into space. The most unimportant person in that crew is absolutely as important as the captain, for that ship's survival. If anyone goofs up, they're all going to die. It's a new social glue that space travel will impose on humankind.

Go to the best, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It managed to give you a sense that things familiar to us now, had been moved just one step out, into that area where there is no air.

STARLOG: *2001* premiered at a time when no one took science-fiction films seriously. Most of the picture's appeal came from that approach.

HERBERT: A good point. They did take it seriously, and that's the

only way science-fiction films will survive. We must start getting more of the same. I also know I'm right in saying that we're now in the pulp era of science-fiction movies.

STARLOG: Hasn't the mainstream media almost always been 30 years behind the genre?

HERBERT: Oh, yes. We haven't graduated yet to this genre's fine literary or dramatic capabilities. Look at *Battlestar Galactica*, just "*Wagon Train* in space."

STARLOG: That premise might have worked: I think David Gerrold diagnosed the problem correctly when he said *Galactica's* central theme was about running away.

HERBERT: It would have been better if the survivors had a tangible goal and not have said, "Well, we've lost what we had. Let's get out and hope no one follows us." Most people disagree with that idea; they said, "That isn't the way how we do it! I'd turn around and kill the bastards."

STARLOG: Do you foresee any similar problems with the new *Dune* script?

HERBERT: Oh, no. Of course, the film has yet to be cast and I haven't seen any shooting or rushes yet. They're getting ready to start down to Mexico soon. The peso is very attractive now. The scenery there is very appropriate for this film. The Sonora Desert is one place that I went to sit in and live in, so I could get the feeling of being in a desert before I wrote *Dune*.

[The production did, in fact, move down to Mexico the first week of October. Ed.]

STARLOG: It sounds as if David Lynch is doing an exceptional job with this project.

HERBERT: Oh, yes. There were a few things I felt that shouldn't have been left out of the script. After I mentioned them, they put them back in.

STARLOG: The film's major concentration won't be on the book's violence and sandworms?

HERBERT: The feel will be for the politics and the people. David has a way – as in *The Elephant Man* – of giving you the feel of a situation, the attitudes of a people and an environment, without going into a lot of detail. That's something Ridley Scott is also good at. He was on the scene for a time. Ridley is a good director, but he

wanted to do an incest story about Paul and his mother. It might have been interesting, but it wouldn't have been *Dune*. I warned him, “Look, they tell me there are 40 million people worldwide who have read *Dune*. If you alienate that audience, you're going to have a turkey.” I mean, look at *The Lord of the Rings*…

STARLOG: Once was enough.

HERBERT: You get my point exactly. They missed the point. Poor animation, poor story. That film just wasn't what it was supposed to be.

STARLOG: And David Lynch hasn't missed your point, he has found the essence of *Dune*!

HERBERT: Yes.

STARLOG: So, what is the essence of *Dune* to Frank Herbert?

HERBERT: It is a story of political, economic, and social commentary which is carried along with a particular kind of drama, the drama of the Messiah. It originated as a study of the Messianic impulse in humankind – why do we follow the leader?

STARLOG: Fortunately, it appears that *Dune* will be faithfully translated to the screen. What about science fiction in general? Can we hope for more quality productions in film and on television?

HERBERT: Oh, sure. There's hope. We're now fighting the investor sources. They're always looking for a sure thing, something that someone else gambled with and won. So, they say, “Give me one of those.”

At the corporate level, where these decisions are made, there's always a scapegoat. If things go bad, the people who made the decision stay, the scapegoat goes. This is hellishly hard on assistant vice-presidents and on the genre. However, along comes someone who recognizes the peculiar value of science fiction in telling a story – as it happened in the pulps – and you'll begin to get quality. After a while, the slow accumulation of successes points the way, and although you will never completely get rid of the fringe of bad films and television shows, there's a slow but constant upgrading.

STARLOG: What would you consider the successes thus far?

HERBERT: Oh God, don't put me on the spot – well, OK, *The Day of the Triffids* as a superb film. *Star Trek*, of course, helped, because it created, outside the core of Trekkies, an audience which said, “Oh, that's what you mean by science fiction.” That series told many stories that were peculiar to science fiction. The John Campbell story, “Who Goes There?,” filmed as *The Thing*, was another good

one.

I think *A Clockwork Orange* was a land-mark in the field. It marked a point where we could say, “We've done that; now, we can go do something better.” That was a seminal point. Others were *Forbidden Planet*, *When Worlds Collide*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, even *Close Encounters*…

STARLOG: No other television series?

HERBERT: I don't find myself reaching back for other important science fiction which was made strictly for television. Maybe I missed something, because I don' t watch a lot of television or have a TV. And then, maybe there wasn't much there.

STARLOG: One of your major objections to televised science fiction is its dependence on props. You've written very little “prop” science fiction. Now, your latest novel, *The White Plague*, is being hailed as a mainstream novel, and not science fiction. It is a science-fiction story, but mostly a story about people and what they do to each other. How are sales?

HERBERT: The first figures show that it's doing the “hot cake” thing. They started the first two weeks out with 3,500 copies each week. Every week since then has seen 2,000 more shipped out. So far, it's holding, and they expect that to continue.

The first feedback I've gotten is that many people have been buying it to find out about “this science fiction thing.” They've leafed into the book and said, “Well, this isn't space opera; I think I'll read it!” Fine. That's what I hoped to do. I hoped to acquaint more people with the fact that when you say something is science fiction, it doesn't mean that it has to be space opera or a shoot-'em-up transported off the planet. It can deal with serious, contemporary subjects in analogous or predictive fashion, which is exactly what I'm doing here.

Tell me… when you were reading *The White Plague*, did you identify strongly with any one character, and keep identifying with that character throughout the book?

STARLOG: O'Neill. Pretty much so. There are two predictable things you can do when the end comes: predict that he will do what he does do or that he'll do a reversal. Either is possible, it depends on the way you think. I followed along with what O'Neill did because, right or wrong, he was standing up for himself and saying, “That's it, I'm not taking anymore. Now I fight back.” I was ultimately disappointed in him, but it was still a great book.

HERBERT: That's interesting. It's about one-half of the reaction I've been getting. The other half is people who have put themselves into the story, as themselves, saying, “Well, the world has changed this way. What the hell would I do?”

STARLOG: The book's realism almost forces you do that. You think, “Yeah, people would be stupid enough to do that.” It's almost impossible not to say that several times while reading it.

HERBERT: No, you can't. It's hard for a writer, as you well know, to do a new kind of book – which this is – and find out if you've gotten across what it is that you wanted to get across. It's very pleasant to find that I did because I worked very hard to create that effect. You understand the madman, even though you are repelled by what he does.

STARLOG: Why did you choose Ireland for the book's setting?

HERBERT: I picked it because I know Ireland well. It was suitable given the story I wanted to tell.

STARLOG: Were you trying to wake anybody up?

HERBERT: Of course.

STARLOG: Do you think you will?

HERBERT: Let's wait and see. I may have a monumental flop or I may have an *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Who knows?

STARLOG: Has the book been banned in Dublin?

HERBERT: No, and I don't expect it to be. I've had a very interesting reaction. The Irish who have been born and bred in Ireland have said, “Yes. You nailed it – you nailed Ireland.” The second and third generation Irish-Americans are the ones who are offended by my depiction of the country.

STARLOG: Thanks to the publication of *The White Plague*, there have been allegations that Frank Herbert “hates” the Irish.

HERBERT: And of course, I don't. I don't hate the Irish. As a people, I think the Irish are caught in a psychological bind and in a para-military bind, because of generations of stupidity originating in Great Britain. And, as usual, stupidity engenders stupidity.

STARLOG: True enough. You've explained the essence of *Dune*, according to Herbert; what is

the point of *The White Plague*!

HERBERT: Its first purpose is to entertain. Second, it's true, I do put a lot of message in with a mess of pottage; I do it every time. The message here is that you had better not concentrate all of your

attention on the dangers of atomic energy, because Pandora's Box is open, and many things are coming out of it which are cheaper and much more deadly.

The other side of that coin is not the research or the development of these things, it's how they are used. I'm not against scientific research, I don't want a lid clamped on it – I just want people to start paying attention.

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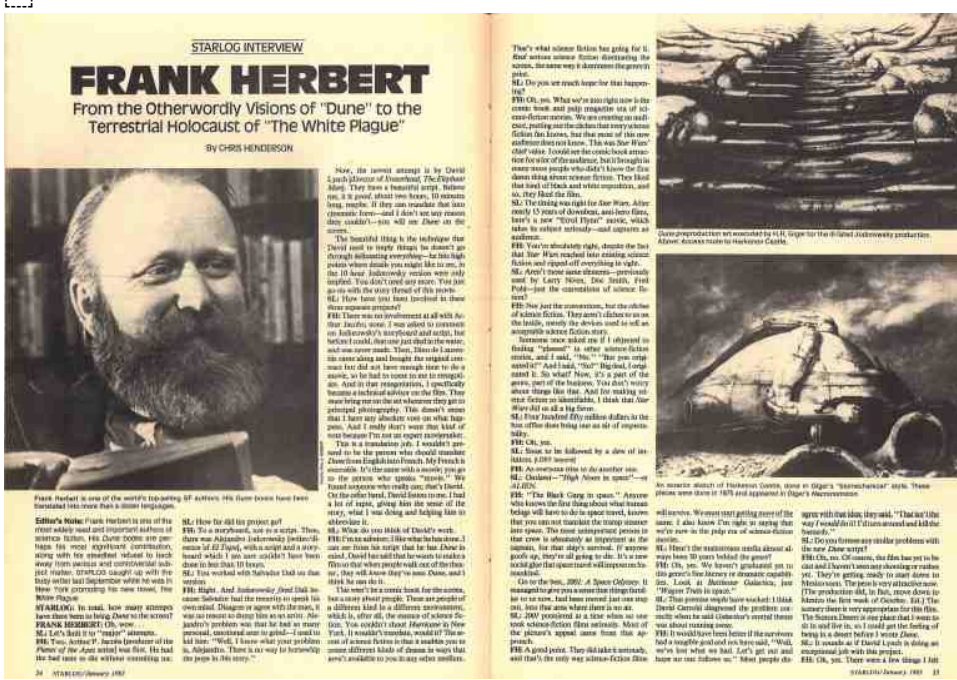

STARLOG INTERVIEW

FRANK HERBERT

From the Otherwordly Visions of "Dune" to the Terrestrial Holocaust of "The White Plague"

BY CHRIS HENDERSON

Frank Herbert is one of the world's top-selling SF authors. His *Dune* books have been translated into more than a dozen languages.

Editor's Note: Frank Herbert is one of the most widely read and important authors of science fiction. His *Dune* books are perhaps his most significant contribution, along with his steadfast refusal to back away from perilous and controversial subject matter. STARLOG caught up with the busy writer last September while he was in New York promoting his new novel, *The White Plague*.

STARLOG: In real, how many attempts have there been to bring *Dune* to the screen?

FRANK HERBERT: Oh, wow . . .

SL: Let's limit it to "major" attempts.

FH: Two. Arthur P. Jacobs [producer of the *Planet of the Apes* series] was first. He had the bad taste to die without spending too much money. Then Alejandro Jodorowsky [writer/director of *El Topo*], with a script and a storyboard which I am sure couldn't have been done in less than 10 hours.

SL: You worked with Salvador Dali on that version.

FH: Right. *And Jodorowsky fired Dali* because Salvador had the temerity to speak his own mind. Disagree or agree with the man, it was no reason to dump him as an artist. Alejandro's problem was that he had so many personal, emotional axes to grind—I said to kid him: "Well, I know what your problem is, Alejandro. There is no way to hotwire the pain in this story."

Now, the newest attempt is by David Lynch [*director of Eraserhead, The Elephant Man*]. They have a beautiful script. Believe me, it is good, about two hours, 10 minutes long, maybe. If they can translate that into cinematic form—and I don't see any reason they couldn't—you will see *Dune* on the screen.

The beautiful thing is the technique that David used to imply things he doesn't go through delineating everything—he hits high points where details you might like to see, in the 10 hour Jodorowsky version were only implied. You don't need any more. You just go on with the story thread of his movie.

SL: How have you been involved in these three separate projects?

FH: There was no involvement at all with Arthur Jacobs' scene. I was asked to comment on Jodorowsky's storyboard and script, but before I could, that one just died in the water, and was never made. Then, Dino de Laurentiis came along and bought the original contract but did not have enough time to do a movie, so he had to come to me to renegotiate. And in that renegotiation, I specifically became a technical advisor on the film. They must bring me on the set wherever they get to principal photography. This doesn't mean that I have any absolute veto on what happens. And I really don't want that kind of veto because I'm not an expert moviemaker.

This is a translation job. I wouldn't personally be the person who should translate *Dune* from English into French. My French is execrable. It's the same with a movie; you go to the person who speaks "movie." We found someone who really can; that's David. On the other hand, David knows movie. I had a lot of input, giving him the sense of the story, what I was doing and helping him to storyvise it.

SL: What do you think of David's work.

FH: I'm no admirer. I like what he has done. I can see from his script that he has *Dune* in mind. David has said that he wants to make a film so that when people walk out of the theater, they will know they've seen *Dune*, and I think he can do it.

That won't be a comic book for the screen, but a story about people. These are people of a different kind in a different environment, which is, after all, the essence of science fiction. You couldn't shoot *Hurricane in New York*. [I wouldn't mention, would it? The essence of science fiction is that it enables you to create different kinds of drama in ways that aren't available to you in any other medium. That's what science fiction has going for it. *Real* serious science fiction dismissing the scenes, the same way it dismisses the genre it's point.

SL: Do you see much hope for that happening?

FH: Oh, yes. What we're now right now is the comic book and pulp magazine era of science fiction movies. We are entering an unsilent, pulling out the cliches that every serious fiction fan knows, but that most of this new audience does not know. This was *Star Wars' chief* value. I could see the comic book attraction for a lot of the audience, but it brought in many more people who didn't know the first damn thing about science fiction. They liked that kind of black and white opposition, and so, they liked the film.

SL: The timing was right for *Star Wars*. After nearly 15 years of downbeat, anti-hero films, here's a new "Errol Flynn" movie, which takes its subject seriously—and captures an audience.

FH: You're absolutely right, despite the fact that *Star Wars* reached into existing science fiction and ripped off everything in sight.

SL: Aren't those same elements—previously used by Larry Niven, Doc Smith, Fred Pohl—just the conventions of science fiction?

FH: Not just the conventions, but the cliches of science fiction. They aren't cliches to us on the inside, merely the devices used as well an acceptable science fiction story.

Someone once asked me if I objected to finding "planet" in other science fiction stories, and I said, "No." "But you originated it!" And I said, "So?" Big deal, I originated it. So what? Now, it's a part of the genre, part of the business. You don't worry about things like that. And for making science fiction so identifiable, I think that *Star Wars* did us all a big favor.

SL: Four hundred fifty million dollars in the box office does bring one an air of respectability.

FH: Oh, yes.

SL: Soon to be followed by a slew of imitators. [*I DO know!*]

FH: An overseas film to do another one.

SL: Disney's—"*High Noon in space*"—or *ALIEN*.

FH: "The Black Gang in space." Anyone who knows the first thing about what human beings will have to do to space travel, knows that you cannot translate the tramp steamer into space. The most unimportant person in that crew is obviously as important as the captain, for that ship's survival. If anyone goofs up, they're all going to die. It's a new social glue that space travel will impose on humankind.

Go to the '80s, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It managed to give you a somewhat true things feeling to us now, had been moved just one step out, into that area where there is no air.

SL: 2001 positioned as a time when no one took science-fiction films seriously. Most of the picture's appeal came from that approach.

FH: A good point. They did take it seriously, and that's the only way science-fiction films will survive. We must start getting more of the same. I also know I'm right in saying that we're now in the pulp era of science-fiction movies.

SL: Here's the mainstream media almost always been 10 years behind the genre?

FH: Oh, yes. We haven't graduated yet to the genre's fine literary or dramatic capabilities. Look at *Battlestar Galactica*, just "*Wagon Trails in space*."

SL: That premise might have worked. I think David Carroll diagnosed the problem correctly when he said Gabriotor's central theme was about running away.

FH: It would have been better if the survivors had a tougher goal and not have said, "Well, we've lost what we had. Let's get out and hope we can follow us." Most people disagree with that idea, they said, "That isn't the way I would do it! I'd turn around and kill the bastards."

SL: Do you foresee any similar problems with the new *Dune* script?

FH: Oh, no. Of course, the film has yet to be cast and I haven't seen any shooting or rushes yet. They're getting ready to start dune in Mexico soon. The pace is very attractive now. [The production did, in fact, move down to Mexico the first week of October. Ed.] The scenery there is very appropriate for this film. The Sonora Desert is one place that I want to do in real live in, so I could get the feeling of being in a desert before I wrote *Dune*.

SL: It sounds as if David Lynch is doing an exceptional job with this project.

FH: Oh, yes. There were a few things I felt

Some preproduction art executed by H.R. Giger for the ill-fated Jodorowsky production. Above: Access route to Harkonnen Castle.

An eclectic sketch of Harkonnen Castle, done in Giger's "biomechanical" style. These pictures were done in 1975 and appeared in Giger's *Necronomicon*.

Source: https://archive.org/stream/starlog_magazine-066/066_djvu.txt

L.A. Reader, 1984

Futuristic Meditations from Dune's Frank Herbert, by Jean Marie Stine, L.A. Reader, 1984

This never-before reprinted conversation was originally published in an issue of the L. A. Reader *in mid-1984 (at the time of the movie release). During our post-interview conversation Frank, who was on his way to climb the Himalayas with Sherpa guides, mentioned that he had just written the outline for what would be the final* Dune *book and he and an attorney had put a copy in a safe deposit box until he returned just in case anything happened to him. On his way to the Himalayas, Frank was diagnosed with a fast moving cancer, and passed away a few months later. Twenty years on, I discovered that no one in the Herbert family had known of the outline, and that its existence had only recently been discovered.*

> A beginning is the time for taking the most delicate care that the balances are correct. This every sister of the Bene Gesserit knows. To begin your study of the life of Muad'Dib, then take care that you first place him in his time: born in the 57th year of the Padishah Emperor, Shaddam IV. And take the most special care that you locate Muad'Dib in his place: the planet Arrakis… Arrakis, the Planet known as Dune, is forever his place.

In 1965, after being turned down by 22 different publishers despite its enthusiastically received serialization in Analog, Frank Herbert's Dune *was published in a tiny edition, of 2,000 copies by a small house known principally for auto-repair manuals. Later that year, the paperback rights were picked by a publisher of genre fiction, notorious for never paying royalties. Herbert's earnings from both editions of his monumental vision (700-plus pages) totaled a modest $2,500.*

Nearly 20 years later, Dune *and its successors have become massive-selling cult classics, their success aided by a terrific series of plugs in the* Whole Earth Catalog *and avid proselytizing by hardcore fans. The fourth book, bearing the unlikely title* God Emperor of Dune, *seemed to be permanently ensconced on the New York Times bestseller list, and the fifth,* Heritage of Dune*, has also made the list. And David Lynch's filmed version of* Dune *was reportedly one of the most expensive movies ever made (for its era).*

The Dune *cycle blends traditional science-fiction elements – supermen, galactic intrigue, alien ecology, panoramic battles between good and evil, etcetera] – with what the* Science Fiction Encyclopedia *terms "complex intellectual discourse and genuinely developed concepts." A common theme in his work is an extrapolation of evolution, and how natural selection creates humanoids able to thrive in the most extreme environments.*

Herbert grew up and was educated in Washington state and spent two decades as a reporter and photographer for newspapers in the Northwest before becoming a full-time novelist. (He was one of the first photojournalists to use a 35mm camera.) Since then, he has been peripatetic to an extreme, living on and traveling to countless islands and at least five continents. He next plans to explore the terrain surrounding Mt. Everest, with several Sherpa pals, and to

document the East/West culture clash in that altitudinous zone.

But when this interview was conducted, he was comfortably settled in an airy condo on Manhattan Beach's boardwalk. State-of-the-art stereo equipment dominated the absolutely uncluttered living room. There are no books in sight. Herbert, clean-shaven, looked like a handsomer Jack Albertson, and was much thinner than the dust-jacket portrait would lead you to believe. Before and after the interview, he chatted fluently on subjects ranging from the latest camera gear to the intricacies of piloting small aircraft, and seemed genuinely pleased to be interviewed.

JMS: *Dune* is your most celebrated, successful and in many ways most personal book. Certainly you must have approached the movie version with a very critical eye. What did you think of it?

HERBERT: Some people who haven't read the book are a bit confused. About 20 percent of these are put off. The others are saying, “I missed something. I'm going to go back and see it again or read the book.” But I don't want to be in a position of just flogging the book. It's a great movie. Really, David has done a damned fine job. Pictorially and texturally it's beautiful. I kept wanting to freeze frame shots and say, “I want that one on my wall, and that one, and that one.” David's a painter; he had Tony Masters there as production designer, for God's sake. And his choice of visual metaphors is really superb. The idea of rococo Renaissance background art… well, I recreated a medieval feudal society. So what does Renaissance art say to Western viewers? It says feudatory, right? You don't even need to mention it. It took me many pages to create the effect on paper he creates in two seconds with a shot.

The only way this movie could have been made was if they spent megabucks on it. And to be pragmatic about it, that meant they had to do a production they could show in theaters everywhere, and that meant that they had to cut it. Luckily, we have about five hours of film. In fact, we have as much film on the cutting room floor as we have on the screen. All the scenes that everybody misses from the book are all there. So we are now discussing doing a special mini-series for T.V. about three or four years down the pike essentially the uncut version of the film.

JMS: The first *Dune* book (the one the movie was based on) taken by itself seems pretty straightforward good guys vs. bad guys stuff, with the good guys triumphing at the end. But in the second book you question a number of assumptions you led the reader to make in the first book and you reveal a much more complex and meaningful design than was apparent in the first book alone.

HERBERT: The first three books were one book in my head. I wrote parts of the second two before I completed the first. In fact I wrote the last chapter of the first one before I finished it. I did develop the other two a bit more because I thought of new stuff. But when I finished that third book I thought I was through with it. I had a theory. Charismatic leaders – not necessarily Messiahs, but Messiahs included – tend to create explosive upheavals in human societies which are very dangerous to individuals and to the societies themselves, because they create power structures. So you get these centers of power and it doesn't matter a damned bit how pure and good the hero is. By just being he creates a power structure and so it's like a magnet: the iron filings, the corruptible, come in and things are done in the name of the leader – as they were done in

Christianity, in Islam, in Buddhism, in all major religions and lesser religions. Things done in the name of the leader are amplified by the members, who follow without thinking, without questioning, and you wind up in Guyana drinking poisoned Kool-Aid. So I wanted to create a charismatic leader (Paul Muad-Dib, the hero of the novel and film), a Messiah you would follow for all of the right reasons. He is loyal to his people, he's honorable and he's true to his friends. Every characteristic that you could possibly think of, including the prince in search of the Grail, is there in that character – you would follow him right into Camelot. And there is the power structure that grows up around him; that's what we deal with in the second book. That shook a lot of people. Here was a hero who didn't make everything all right. He created a power structure. He did it just by being there.

JMS: In the *Dune* books, you seem to question a number of other cultural assumptions. One of them is the belief that the establishment of a democracy necessarily addresses all of humankind's problems and needs.

HERBERT: One of the things I noticed as a reporter – I was a journalist longer than I've been on this side of the table – is that in all the marching in the streets in the '60s, the people who were shouting “Power to the People” didn't mean power to the people. They meant “power to me and I'll tell the people what to do.” When you questioned them it was confirmed at every turn.

Power to the people will really happen when the people wake up to the fact that you can't separate economics from politics, when they wake up to their own motivations, what they want, what can be sold to them. Because the real pitfall of democracy is that it is

demagogue-prone. We like to have people stand up and tell us what we want to hear. I have conditioned myself so that the minute I hear a politician standing up there saying nice things that sound good to lot of people my alarm signals go off and I say, “Why, you damned son of a bitch, you're just another damned demagogue.”

I don't think there's a fucking bit of difference between a bureaucracy that is instituted by a democratic regime, a state; socialist regime, a communist regime or a capitalist regime. Take a look at us right now. We have created a bureaucracy in this country which is completely out of the hands of the people. Your votes do not touch it. One day when I was working in Washington, D.C., as a speech-writer for a U.S. senator from Oregon, I was at a meeting of the Department of Commerce and a very, very high department official, a lifetime bureaucrat, was talking about another senator, who was giving them some trouble. And this high bureaucrat called this senator a “transient.” And sure enough, that senator was defeated in the next election. So he was a transient. But the bureaucrat was, still there, and he retired on a separate retirement system for the federal bureaucracy.

People ask me what I think about Reagan, or “Ray-gun,” as I tend to call him. Well, you know, he has several good things going for him. Number one, we know he's an actor. We tend not to think about other politicians as actors. But they all are. Mondale's an actor. I have good reports, accurate reports on him off-camera. Offstage he can be a real bastard to his people. You never see that when the smiling man gets up in front of the camera. He depends on his analyses to tell him what people want to hear. The other thing about Reagan is that I think he's pretty much beyond the age where he's easily corrupted. His foreign policy scares the shit out of me, but as long as he's paranoid of the bureaucracy I'll stand aside and applaud. And say, “Focus on that baby!” For that much I like him.

JMS: How do you feel we could put the power in the hands of the people?

HERBERT: Well, I think there are several ways to do it. Governments, being power centers, as I said before, attract the corrupt and the corruptible. So we have to go after the problem of how do we design our governments, so that we attract people who are not corruptible, or not easy to corrupt, anyway. The Romans solved it a long time ago. Before they got on their empire kick they went out and got a leader and said, “You're the boss for a year or two. But that's it!”

One of the things I would do – If I could wave a magic wand – I would give us a six-year presidency, no re-election. A two-term, maximum four-year senator, and a one-term, four-year congressman. If they can't discover how the system works in Washington within a month of being there (hell, I discovered within two weeks of working for a senator), then they aren't bright enough to belong there. It's a privilege to work for your society. Not a right, not something earned by being there forever. We have to keep them in for short terms, attract good people with high, pay. And if I had my say about it, I'd make it a criminal offense with long prison terms for any military officer to accept a job with a defense after a retirement. That's handing the fox the key to the henhouse and saying, “I'm going to be gone for the night.” That's an invitation to corruption, and of course that's what we get.

We have the instruments and we have the precedents for handing power back to the people. I think government ought to be an experience. You know, when this government was formed it was called, worldwide, “The Great Experiment.” Somewhere along the

line we carved it in stone. Experiments are things you test and find out what's wrong with them. Right?

I would experiment with a process that is now available to us. I would call it something like “The Great Theory.” I would select at random, on the basis of those who voted in the last election (we could do this easily now with computers), a rotating core group of 13 good people to serve at all levels of government, high and low. I would give them absolutely awesome powers, leave them in office for one year, and I would make it damn near a capital offense to interfere with the operations of this whole thing. I would set it up so that they had a budget, a sufficient budget, but no standing support facilities, no continuing bureaucracies. Every new committee would have to hire its own people and its own experts under a spoils system. And, at very high levels, I would give them the power of subpoena, the power to look in any place they wanted to look without question – and the power to fire.

Now let's go down to lowered levels. I discussed this with a member of the bureaucracy in the state of Washington, an official of the school system. He asked me, “How would you apply this?” I said: “Well, let's go to the local school district. Under my system any time the local school district proposes to spend over X amount of dollars, automatically such a review committee would be called into being. The members would be selected from among those who voted in the previous election. They'd have the power of life and death over that proposal, the power to subpoena; they could go into the school system and examine the records back to the dawn of history. They could look at how the school system is operating, how it had been spending its money in the past.”

This bureaucrat asked me, “Do you think they'll always make good decisions?” And I said, “No. But they'd only be there for a year and if they made a mistake it'd be very apparent and the next committee

could deal with it." His next reaction, I thought, was just magnificent, very telling, almost like a classic Freudian slip. He said: "Do you think some damned housewife could understand what's going on in the school system that well?" [Laughs] I said: "You bet your sweet bippy I do!" Because if you put the responsibility on people, really put it on them, they rise to the occasion.

I would also make it impossible for any person who had served on one such committee ever to serve on one again. Once a lifetime. It would completely turn around what we think of as the democratic system, because it would make voting attractive. You'd want to be in on the chance to be selected for this. And you would know that one of you, somebody who voted, would be right in the seat of power if the need arose. I think it would really give power to the people, which is what democracy is supposed to be all about. Now all of the closet aristocrats will come out of the closet when you propose this kind of thing and say, "My God! At random you're going to get some real dopes!" And I would say: "What are the statistical probabilities that you would get 13 real dopes? Maybe you will. Maybe the monkeys will type the great novel."

JMS: What are the odds that you would get more dopes this way than by the present system?

HERBERT: [Laughs] I'm willing to gamble. Now I'll tell you something interesting in *my* reading of history: Every time we have pulled the lid off the human desire to govern our, own affairs, to be free of government – we've had a renaissance of some kind. We've had a social renaissance, we've had a political renaissance, an artistic renaissance. Every time in history we've unleashed this, we've gone forward by leaps and bounds. So I'm saying, "All right,

this is what history says to me. So why don't we do it again?" That's what I'm playing with in. the seventh *Dune* book, moving toward showing the kind of governments that finally evolve out of the situation I have created.

JMS: In *Dune*, written in the early '60s, you were one of the first to question the danger of modifying the ecology of a particular environment to try to "improve" human conditions.

HERBERT: Let me give you a little example on that one. About 20 years ago the U.S. and West Germany pooled their resources – well, we put in most of the bucks and the people – and went into North Africa, and all across most of the southern veldt of the Sahara. We dug a lot of tube wells – we drilled them, put pumps on them and brought water up. We did a good thing and then we walked away from it, more or less. Technologically we sure as hell walked away from it.

What happened was that they had more water and more grazing areas. More arable land was opened up, more cattle were put on the land, and the population grew to equal the new food supply. Then about five years ago, the rainfall, cyclic rainfall, decidedly decreased. Three years ago it went, practically dry. Of course the water table went down much faster because they were pumping. Right now as we sit here talking, 2,000 people a day are dying in that area. You can't go in and fix one thing to make everything all right in a complex situation. It's like an internal combustion engine. If there is only one thing wrong you may happen on the one thing that fixes it. But chances are much larger that by just doing one thing you create other problems you're going to have to adjust. And you have to keep adjusting until you create a balance.

For instance, one of the side effects of what we did in some of those North African villages was that we broke down the social system. Women previously went to the well for water, which they carried back on their heads, and the well was where they solved all their community problems. By piping water into the houses we cut off that link in their society and all hell broke loose. There were family feuds, murders, all kinds of things that had never occurred in these places, in that particular way, ever before. The Green Revolution was another, similar con game. We went in with a technologically based system into primitive countries, and where before they had depended on manure and animals to pull their plows and that sort of thing, we made them dependent on special soil additives and special seed stock which was, by the way, very vulnerable to disease.

JMS: In *Dune* one of the groups is trying, through genetic manipulation and selective breeding, to produce a mental superman, a Kwisatz Haderach, who can see and predict the course of future history, guiding humanity along the best path for its development. But in *Children of Dune*, the hero's son, after achieving a state of radically expanded consciousness, says, “There is no Kwisatz Haderach.”

HERBERT: You know what we're discussing, don't you? We're discussing prescience, prediction, and free will. Very old ideas. I started analyzing what people really mean when they use these words. In the first place, and I've said this time and again, if I were to hand you right now an exact and unswervable heartbeat-by-heartbeat prediction that nothing could change your future or what's going to happen to you from now to the moment of your death, your

life would be instant replay, an absolute and utter bore. You'd be sitting there at this instant saying: “Well, next he's going to say…” You'd know it all. Eighty tedious years if you're unlucky. Ten if you're lucky. That's why I blinded the hero in the second book. He doesn't need his eyes. He knows everything that is going to happen. He chose to put himself on that monorail.

What most people want when they talk about futurism – all the companies that hire me to play futurist for them – they don't want the future, they want now locked in. FDR, he did it. In 1933 he appointed a committee called the Brain Trust. They were given the primary job of “determining” what the course of technological development and innovation would be for the next 25 years and what influence this would have on our lives. What had they not come up with? That's the fascinating thing. Faster-than-sound travel, transistors, antibiotics, atomic power, World War II, are just a few small items that these Brain Trusters missed. What does this say to us? It says that if you look at history carefully the surprises are the things that turn us upside down as a society. Asimov in his *Foundation Trilogy* has the *Second Foundation*, which can predict the course of the future, and he has his character *the Mule* in there, his wild card, but again totally within scientifically predictable norms. Horseshit!

What technology does to us is distribute the wild cards farther and farther afield. Because really what's going on is that the amount of energy that can be aimed and released is getting greater and greater and falling into the hands of smaller and smaller groups. The availability of this energy is also being disseminated all through this society. Something I proved conclusively in my research for *White Plague*. I got on the horn and I started calling suppliers of equipment I would need to engage in recombinant DNA research myself in my basement. I introduced myself only as Dr. Herbert. I didn't elaborate. You know, what's the difference between a Doctor of Letters and a Doctor of Medicine? Anyway, I asked, “How, does my purchasing

department get your XR 21?" Their reply was, "When your check has cleared, we will ship." Anything I wanted.

Now does that mean I want to clamp a lid on it? No way! That would only drive it underground and make a black market, which is what we do with hard drugs. We create a black market. A very profitable black market by the way, which can buy the inviolate Briefcases of diplomats, buy the police force of an entire major city or enough of it that it makes no never mind. You know what happened to the heroin the cops seized in The French Connection? It vanished from the police property room in New York City. You can't control these things with a lid. In fact if you try, like a pressure cooker, you only create dangerous, explosive pressure.

Survival of the species depends on adaptability, and that depends on variability, variation. I think that big government is one of the major dangers in our world. It tends to homogenize a society, and our strength is in our variations. The bigger it is, the worse it is. Small governments, small societies – developing their own mores, their own social systems, their own people, going their own ways to a limit – do not endanger their neighbors. I hope to God we get off the planet soon, because that's what will happen in space. The difficulty of communication across space at our present level of technology dictates that if we get off this planet with a viable breeding population of humans, and if they scatter into different directions, each group is going to develop in its own way. Variation means the species will survive. And that's what I'm addressing in the *Dune* books.

JMS: You said earlier that your original vision of the *Dune* saga encompassed only the material in three volumes culminating with *Children of Dune*. Why did you write more?

HERBERT: I had a character who wouldn't get out of my head. it fascinated me to think of what kind of a society would develop if it was under the thumb of one individual for 3,500 years. You know, it's kind of like an amplification of the Pharaonic dynasties but all in one dynasty. So I had that character firmly in mind. It wouldn't get out. So I said, “Okay, here's your society after 3,500 years. What happens? What has happened? What do we become?” I was also questioning another major premise: that we know what peace is. And yet for that to be true, every person would have to know themselves in the classical sense. Every person would, have to know: “Why am I doing this? What are my motives? What is my unconscious direction?” Well, that is a big issue, you know. A much bigger issue than people generally realize. So I'm saying, “All right, you think you know peace and what it would mean and you think you know what the future can bring. Here's a guy that's going to give it to you for 3,500 years and enforce it. The only violence is his. Experience it for the term of the book, and see how you like it.” It's a little demonstration project like *1984*.

And all of these premises are the same premise when you come right back to it. That evolution cuts off right here. And this is the destiny of humankind, not a death wish, in my books. That's what I'm playing with in the seventh book, moving toward showing the kind of government that finally evolves out of the situation I've been creating.

I've been playing these games all along. Not popular games. But obviously there are 15 million people worldwide who have said, “Hey, this is interesting.” So I have an audience out there. And I'm talking to them, saying, “Take another look at a these precious premises upon which we have based our governments and our ideas of leadership. Let's take a good, long, hard look at things. Do

they really work or do we continue to make mistakes – the same mistakes over and over and over?

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Psychology Today, 1984

Master of Dune, by Ross Stagner, Psychology Today, 1984

"It may be," says Frank Herbert, "that the primary attraction of science fiction is that it helps us understand what it means to be human." The creation of understandable humans in understandable alien cultures on understandable other planets, he explains, must reflect in some way the present human condition. Exposing the unexamined assumptions of our society to an alien setting gives us a chance to look at and evaluate those assumptions from a different perspective, and in doing so, says Herbert, "science fiction does its greatest, most enduring work."

Herbert, born in 1920, has been involved in that work for nearly 30 years. His first science-fiction novel was published in 1956, and he has written more than 20 books since then. His most famous novel, Dune*, was published in 1965. Set on the barren planet of Dune, it examined the implications of life in a desert ecology and was hailed as an environmental-awareness book. The winner of two prestigious science-fiction writing awards,* Dune *has sold more than 10 million copies, spawned a series of four sequels and recently has been made into a motion picture. The next book in the* Dune *series,* Chapterhouse: Dune*, is due out next spring. And Herbert says the* Dune *novels will keep coming "as long as they interest me."*

Herbert has done research in psychology, anthropology, religion and linguistics, among other things, and has worked as a newspaper journalist, professional photographer, radio news commentator and

oyster diver. He lives in Port Townsend, Washington.

Dune*, the basis of Herbert's fame, is a fascinating tale from the viewpoints of psychology, ecology, religion and politics. The scene, some thousands of years in the future, is a galactic empire organized on feudal lines. Duke Leto Atreides is ordered by the Emperor to take over the governance of a huge desert planet, Arrakis (called Dune by almost everyone), which is of great importance to the empire because it is the sole source of a mysterious spice, melange. This spice, secreted by the huge sandworms of Dune, prolongs the lives of those who use it up to 800 years, gives them some degree of precognition (although not dependably) and enables the navigators of the huge interstellar spaceships to see "world lines" along which they can travel safely from star to star. The plot involves a conspiracy against Duke Leto. But there are numerous other conspiracies. We are introduced to a secret society called the Bene Gesserit (Herbert's play on the word "Jesuit"), a group of women dedicated to a selective-breeding experiment to create the ultimate human, whom they call the Kwisatz Haderach (this is based on the Kabbala of Jewish mysticism). Leto's son, Paul, is an offspring of this program, and ultimately proves to be the Kwisatz Haderach. He has, however, mental and physical powers not anticipated by the Bene Gesserit, who cannot manipulate him as they had planned. Ultimately, Paul becomes the messiah who leads the desert tribesmen on a jihad, a holy war, to destroy the oppressive empire. The movie* Dune *will be released in December. Herbert would not say much about the film or its special effects, but he praised the project highly. His greatest enthusiasm, however, was reserved for the director, David Lynch, who won critical acclaim for* The Elephant Man *in 1980. He describes Lynch as having an amazing talent for converting pages of the novel into a single camera shot or at most a one-minute*

episode. Herbert also expressed satisfaction that the psychological aspects of the novel had been preserved in the film. "The movie begins as Dune *begins. It ends as* Dune *ends," he says appreciatively, "and I hear my dialogue all the way through it."*

– Ross Stagner

STAGNER: How do you plan a novel, such as *Dune*?

HERBERT: Each novel begins with a problem. It might he the impact of diminishing natural resources, such as fossil fuels, or the consequences of a terrorist bombing. In *Dune* the problem is "how we make messiahs." This involves deciding on the personality traits of the putative messiah – charisma, leadership, a doctrine and skill in interpersonal relationships – and how these attributes must mesh with the features of the culture that selects, elevates and follows – or kills – the messiah.

STAGNER: I think you are saying that when people have enough problems, enough serious problems, they will seek a messiah and somewhere within the group one will arise. Social psychologists think along these lines when we try to explain phenomena like Adolf Hitler or the Rev. Jim Jones of the infamous Jonestown massacre, the kind of charismatic leader whom people will follow blindly.

HERBERT: Yes. Messiahs can be hazardous to your health. That's what I set out to show in the first three books of the *Dune* series. The first thing I did was set up a messiah who would make decisions. He was the kind of person everybody would follow for the right reasons. He was honorable, loyal to his people, trustworthy, everything you could think of that you would admire in a leader. But then the power structure developed around him, and power attracts people who want power for the sake of power.

STAGNER: You mean the old saying that "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

HERBERT: That doesn't quite hit the mark. I have a theory that power attracts the corruptible.

STAGNER: You don't think that the mere possession of power can have a corrupting effect, that a person not originally attracted to power – but who gains it – will be inclined to misuse it?

HERBERT: I'm sure that can happen. But I still believe that those who are attracted to a power position, who actively seek a role that carries great power with it, are those with a predisposition to be corrupted by it.

STAGNER: And that's what happened in *Dune*?

HERBERT: That's what happens in the second book, *Dune Messiah*. And in *Children of Dune*, we have the terrible schismatic eruption and fragmentation of the power system. This is all a replay of elements of our own history – the Christian religion, Islam, Buddhism. If Jim Jones had endured, his system would have fragmented.

STAGNER:What does this teach us?

HERBERT: That messiahs are not with us forever. Even if their decisions are perfect, they set up power structures – churches, political systems and so on – that are then taken over by others; they make human errors, and their errors are amplified by the members who follow blindly. To avoid this, we must question our leaders.

I'm also talking to the people who deal with psychology, and telling them to beware of the attitude that mama or papa knows best. We need to be very aware of our own motivations, and how those motivations gather followers. This comes right out of Carl Jung. He was very aware of this. You read his unpublished lecture notes, and you see him returning to this theme time and time again.

STAGNER: But didn't he become a messiah himself?

HERBERT: He was made into one by others. But he warned against it. He said such things as, “I am not for all time.”

STAGNER: So he was saying, “Don’t make me a messiah”?

HERBERT: Yes.

STAGNER: And all psychologists, political leaders, religious leaders and so on should take that stance?

HERBERT: That's right. And if we all took that attitude toward our social systems – political, economic and religious – then we would begin at least to weed out the demagogues.

STAGNER: How did the messiah theme lead to a desert?

HERBERT: Historically, most messiahs seem to have come from the wilderness. The decision to use a desert ecology as a background then led to the choice of Islam as a model for the theology of the novel and led to Arabic as the ancestor of the local language. I studied comparative linguistics and learned the rules for linguistic

drift, the change in vowels and accents that occurs over long periods of time. I then took familiar Arabic words and modified them according to these rules to derive a futuristic Arabic.

STAGNER: Do you take the same pains in creating your characters?

HERBERT: After the plot has been sketched, I begin a folder for each major character and invent a case history with heredity, early development, traumatic experiences, successes, unusual abilities, vocational interests and skills. If I happen to run across a photograph that fits the image of how this person should appear, I clip it and glue it to the folder. Then, when I want to write an episode that will reveal the character's decision-making style, or way of interacting with an authority figure, or stubbornness or integrity. I have at hand the basis for a consistent and psychologically congruent mode of speech and action.

STAGNER: The psychology of your novels seems to be heavily based on the work of Jung.

HERBERT: I'm not a disciple of Jung, but I do use his archetypes and symbolism. I'll go into archetypes that may dominate a character's life.

STAGNER: You mean you develop your characters according to Jung.

HERBERT: Yes. Chani is feeling-thinking. She stresses those opposites. Jessica is the same. So the two dominant women in *Dune* are set up this way. And I went for other archetypal figures throughout the book. I have the young prince in search of the grail, the wise old man and the fool, the one who can say, "You're naked," to the king.

STAGNER: And your largest symbol, the gigantic, melange-producing sandworms of *Dune*?

HERBERT: The sandworm is the mindless monster of the deep who guards the pearl of great price. It is the black bull of the corrida, the dragon that dances in the streets at Chinese New Year. The pearl of great price, of course, is melange. It extends life and also extends the senses of the users. This gives me another chance to introduce the sensing-personality type in some of my characters.

STAGNER: Did you have any formal training in psychology?

HERBERT: I stumbled onto a pair of psychologist-psychoanalysts and worked with them for a while. It wasn't a traditional analysis, but they influenced my thinking a great deal. She had a whole set of

Jung's lecture notes, unpublished notes, on a rack around their living room: they completely circled the room, a rather large mop. I found that very impressive. These people directed my reading and thinking and gave me the equivalent of a doctorate in psychology in 3½ years.

STAGNER: That suggests real dedication to your work, as does your decision to live in such an isolated community.

HERBERT: That's why we chose Port Townsend. It's off the beaten track sufficiently that I can be isolated when I am writing. I am less likely to be interrupted by fans. I don't like to turn fans away, but…

STAGNER: Sure. Your fans, after all, contribute to your welfare and well-being.

HERBERT: It's much more than that. They give you feedback on what you have been publishing. Unless you get that kind of feedback, you will get farther and farther up in your ivory tower, and you don't know what the hell is going on in your world. That's also my reason for avoiding the lecture platform.

STAGNER: You mean that on the platform you can't get feedback?

HERBERT: Well, I change the routine every chance I get. I get off the platform, down on the floor, and talk to individuals. I carry a radio mike and walk up and down the aisles. We get a rap session going. It's a nice form of exchange, where you are really finding out what is bothering people in this particular audience. Because when you are talking about science fiction, you generally are into mythology – the mythology of this universe, and especially this planet. Science fiction, or speculative fiction, is a form of myth. Out of this discussion will come questions that show what things are disturbing people.

STAGNER: Then you try to answer these questions and address the relevant problems by examining them under the light of an alien culture?

HERBERT: I think science-fiction writers are unique in that we don't have the limits on our patterns of association that most writers do. Realistic writers must offer mostly familiar, conformist associations. Science-fiction writers aren't tied down to this planet, or these kinds of humans, or these definitions of what is truly alien.

STAGNER: Maybe that is why so many commentators refer to science fiction as escapist literature.

HERBERT: Yes, there is an escapist element in science fiction. I think that, from my own point of view, what I build into what I'm writing – and I work very hard to do this – is some escapism. I try to give people experiences that they could not have any other way,

take them to places they have never experienced, where they witness events that could not occur except on that page.

STAGNER: But what about the message you try to work in, the messiah?

HERBERT: Sure, you can put a pot of message in with your mess of pottage. But if it doesn't interest readers, you've wasted your efforts.

STAGNER: You mean, develop the story and spread a message underneath it, or something like that?

HERBERT: Sure, you layer it through. But writers, especially science-fiction writers, have to realize that primarily we are in the entertainment business. Only when you catch the reader's interest can you hope to have him or her be influenced by your message.

STAGNER: Plausible accounts of the future must be enough to stir the interest of many readers. Do people often ask you to predict the future for them?

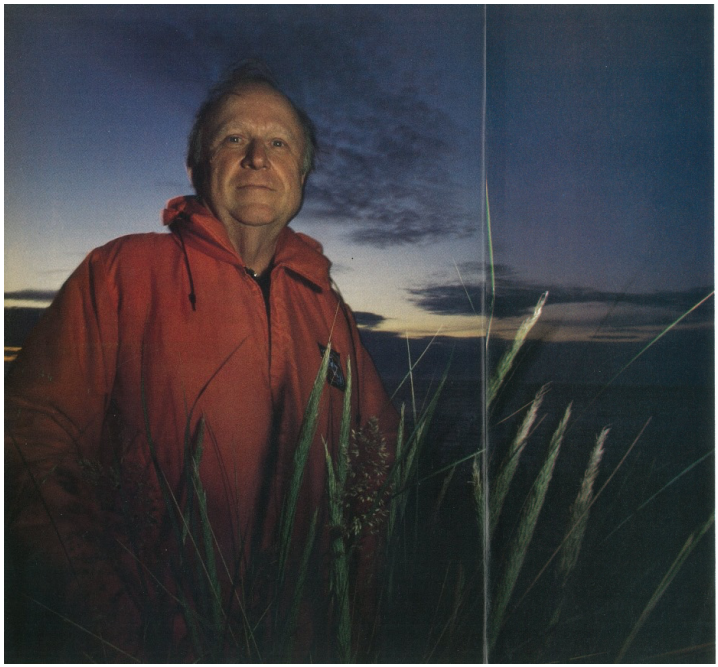
HERBERT: That’s something I run into all the time when I'm asked to teach futurism or to speak to futurist societies. They don't want you to sit there and give them a second-by-second, heartbeat-by-

heartbeat outline of everything that's going to happen to them for the rest of their lives. What these futurists want is what U.S. Steel is going to do next week on the big board. And while you're at it, give me a couple of winners at Hialeah. Well, science fiction doesn't do that, it examines the human condition in alien surroundings and speculates on possible futures.

STAGNER: But over the years science-fiction writers have described things that eventually became part of our lives. Do you see yourself as a predictor at all! Would you be surprised if 200 years from now people were sitting around saying, “My God, Frank Herbert told us about that”?

HERBERT: I'm a pathfinder. It may not be a path anybody wants to follow. I'm just saying there it is. I've been then, and it's interesting country.

Ross Stagner is a social psychologist at Wayne Stare University who has dabbled in science-fiction writing. His work has been published in Astounding Stories *magazine.*



PT CONVERSATION

FRANK HERBERT

Master of Dune

HIS SCIENCE FICTION TAKES US OUT OF THIS WORLD TO EXAMINE OUR INNER SELVES.

"It may be," says Frank Herbert, "that the primary attraction of science fiction is that it helps us understand what it means to be human." The creation of understandable humans in understandable alien cultures on understandable other planets, he explains, must reflect in some way the present human condition. Exposing the unexamined assumptions of our society to an alien setting gives us a chance to look at and evaluate those assumptions from a different perspective, and in doing so, says Herbert, "science fiction does its greatest, most enduring work."

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Science-fiction author Frank Herbert.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ED KASH/GAMMA-LIAISON

Ariel Book of Fantasy, 1985

A Visit With Frank Herbert, by Paul Williams, Ariel Book of Fantasy II, 1985

Frank Herbert's *Children of Dune* was published in paperback in 1977, and immediately became one of the two or three best-selling novels ever to come out of the science fiction field. It is the climactic novel of the *Dune* trilogy, the complex and immensely powerful tale of Paul Atreides, a young man who finds himself the central figure in a political, religious, economic, and, ultimately, ecological confrontation involving the entire galactic empire and plots and counterplots that have been planned for generations.

The story takes place on the desert planet Arrakis, land of huge sandworms, the invaluable but addictive mind-altering spice melange, and the Fremen, natives who have been shaped by the implacable desert into a fierce righteousness that is as appealing as it is terrifying. Arthur C. Clarke called the first book, *Dune*, “unique in the depth of its characterization and the extraordinary detail of the world it creates. I know nothing comparable to it except *The Lord of the Rings*.”

The author of the *Dune* trilogy lives at the end of a dirt road, on the edge of a city, in a world largely of his own making. He and his wife Beverly have a six-acre farm on the Olympic Peninsula in northwest Washington State that they have turned into a “demonstration project” in ecological living and efficient energy use.

My first impression as I drove up to their home in the woods, after taking the ferry over from Seattle, was that I had arrived at the luxurious rural retreat of a hardworking writer who had made it big and bought his dream house. But I was to learn that this was, in a sense, an illusion: the comforts and the luxury were real, but, like those of the Atreides palace on Arrakis, they concealed an inner practicality and purposefulness. Each comfort in the Herbert home is – paradoxically – designed to demonstrate the possibilities of a life-style centered in austerity, energy-efficiency, and respect for nature.

Dune has been credited with playing a major role in introducing American young people to the concept of ecology and the need for environmental activism. Ecological relationships and goals are at the heart of the Arrakis saga; I remember in 1967, when I first read the book, if you heard someone use the word “ecology” it was almost a sure bet that he or she had read *Dune*. I asked Frank Herbert how he felt about the rapid growth of the movement he had helped to launch. His eyes twinkled, something that happens when he knows he's about to catch you off-guard:

“I think that, to a very great extent, environmentalists have gone a long way down a dead end road. The ecological thing is being sold on the basis of the sinners versus the saved, the developers versus the conservationists. It’s the good guys and the bad guys. And I will guarantee you that continuing along that course will destroy the planet.”

Frank Herbert has the big house – a three-story A-frame, with cedar shake roof – and the swimming pool (to be heated by solar collectors), but he is hardly a man of leisure. He now speaks of his writing and his promotional tours on behalf of his books as ways to support his “ecology habit.” His habit encompasses collaboration on a revolutionary new windmill design, experiments with chicken

manure as an energy source, more effective methods of forest maintenance, and new design ideas for wood-burning home heating systems.

Frank Herbert is not a hero. If you have read *Dune Messiah* or *Children of Dune*, you know that he thinks of the hero as the most dangerous man on earth. The better the intentions, the greater the danger. Movements create counter-movements, bitter-end confrontations; and the essence of ecology-consciousness is that we're all in this together. So he keeps a low profile, and his experiments aim at nothing bolder than finding more efficient, ecologically appropriate ways to live “the good life.”

Frank took me on a walking tour of his “farm.” There is a large garden in back of the house, and a sloping hill (planted in wine grapes) below the garden, which leads down to a duckpond where the Herberts raise Ruen ducks (from France – they look like mallards but get plumper faster). To the right of the garden is the chicken house, site of a once and future experiment in the uses of methane.

“I’m going to put a more sophisticated unit in,” Frank explained; “I tore down the other one. That was a truck inner tube and a generator mash system, using chicken shit and straw to produce gas, which I stored in the inner tube to get pressure. I wanted to see how much heat it would generate. And I got a good reading on it. It wasn't the safest way in the world to do it, methane can be very explosive. You can blow your chicken house sky high. You need a good positive system to exclude air, oxygen, from the methane generator. But its relatively simple to do that.”

Use everything. Experiment with it, find out how it works, find a way to make your needs work together with your situation. I began to see the process. It is not merely a matter of whether Frank saves more

money (and energy) with these systems than he spends devising them: it is a matter of what he learns – from mistakes as well as successes – and the possible implications for individual farmers and homeowners all over the world.

The thought occurred to me, as we talked, that the planning and carrying out of Frank's ecological demonstration project is somewhat akin to the plotting and writing of a novel. The details interact with each other, take on a life of their own. The planet Arrakis and the history of Paul Atreides grew out of Frank Herbert's imagination and careful research; but surely there is a point at which the imagined world becomes real and starts suggesting new possibilities, or inevitabilities, to its creator. In the same way, I could see Frank's demonstration project suggesting new possibilities to him by its very presence in his daily life. At what point does the dream world, painstakingly brought to life, become a self-perpetuating reality?

Next to the greenhouse is a large patio – sunlight reflected off the patio enriches the green-house – perfect for parties, protected from the prevailing winds, with a barbecue pit set in and designed (of course) for optimum draft. In order to increase the wintertime sun on the pool building, Frank is having three fir trees near it taken out, to be replaced with 14-foot nursery-planted native maples (“They grow rather rapidly once they are established”) which will shade the patio in the summer, then drop their leaves to provide maximum sun exposure for wintertime solar heating.

(“Part of it,” Frank told me later, “is that things have to be *recognizable*. I have a recognizable patio out there. The people I'm aiming this at, they would recognize that, they would come in and say, I can live with that. The greenhouse, the pool… It is the secondary uses of these things that might surprise them.”)

Frank led me to a cleared area somewhat to the side of the big

house, empty except for a small wooden structure in the back corner. “This will be the shop, with a guest house over it. That – ” (gesturing at the existing structure) “will be a corner of the building; it's all designed to be the base of a tower for our windmill.”

Windmill? “Sorry, I don't have the new model here; we just had made down in Oakland. The rotor, that is – a guy is making the collector for it. We patented one, you know.”

I explained to Frank that I had heard rumors, but I did not know anything specific. Who was he working with? “John Ottenheimer, Frank Lloyd Wright's last personal student. He lives in the San Juan Islands. John and I shared the design and testing – our heads work well together. The corner of the porch off our living room was our test bench. We had one four-foot diameter, four-foot high model that I burned my hand on badly in a 45-knot wind one night…”

“We have patented a vertical axis wind machine – after designing, building, and testing a series of models – which is in many respects better than anything that has been done before. It doesn't have to be shut down in high winds; it collects a lot of wind and channels it to a point of thrust on a relatively small rotor.”

“Our next step, I think, will be to license someone to build these things for the market. We've had a visit and phone calls from a consortium in Tobago who want to build a 1,200-foot diameter tower with a 100-foot rotor, to pump sea water to a mountain top where it would run down and generate electricity, But the major application, at first, would be to heat homes and water.”

We were back in the house now. I had no end of questions for Frank Herbert the inventor, but there were also these things I wanted to know from Frank Herbert the science fiction writer. Like, for example, what did he think of *Star Wars*?

“*Star Wars* appears to have dipped into me and everybody else in sight. It was a comic book for the screen – no story there – you see it for the special effects. The rip-off of well-known science fiction stories appears quite obvious to many people. My agent still hasn't given up the idea that maybe we should go for the throat, a lawsuit… But when they copy in Hollywood, they’re very clever about it. And you wonder if, a court case, if that's the kind of energy you want to spend.”

What's happened with the movie of *Dune*?

“I got a phone call from Camera One, the Paris-based production company that's making the movie; they said Jodorowski is off the project, and they're going to start principal photography by next spring.” (Alejandro Jodorowski, director of *El Topo*, apparently spent the last couple of years and a lot of money trying to get a *Dune* movie together, without a great deal of success. Frank said, to my surprise, that the people who own movie rights to *Dune* have never asked for his help, have not shown him a script, did not say who the new director would be.) “My feeling about *Dune* is that the best way to do it visually is as a TV mini-series, one 90-minute and five one-hour pieces. You could really do a bang-up job on that, and the footage could then be cut for theatrical release.”

There is a movie planned of Herbert's 1968 novel, *The Santaroga Barrier*; Frank said he's read the script and it's excellent. And in the wake of *Star Wars'* success, Frank was asked to do a film treatment for Dino de Laurentiis; the treatment is not going to be used, but in the course of writing it Frank worked out an idea, which he says will be central to his next novel, now in progress.

And yes, there will be a *Dune Four* one of these years. It will take place centuries later, presumably

involving a new set of characters: “I don't talk about work in

progress. But I had a story idea that really caught me, something that grew out of those stories and that research."

Which brings us to perhaps the most fascinating thing I learned, as we talked on into the night, about the creation of the *Dune* stories: all three books were planned and plotted out before the first book was written. Originally it was intended as a single book; the sequels weren't made up to capitalize on the first book's success, they were conceived of as part of the original project. "I had parts of *Children of Dune* written before *Dune* was completed. Quite a bit of *Dune Messiah* was written before *Dune* was finished, and the last chapter of *Dune* was written before I'd quite reached the halfway mark in *Dune*…"

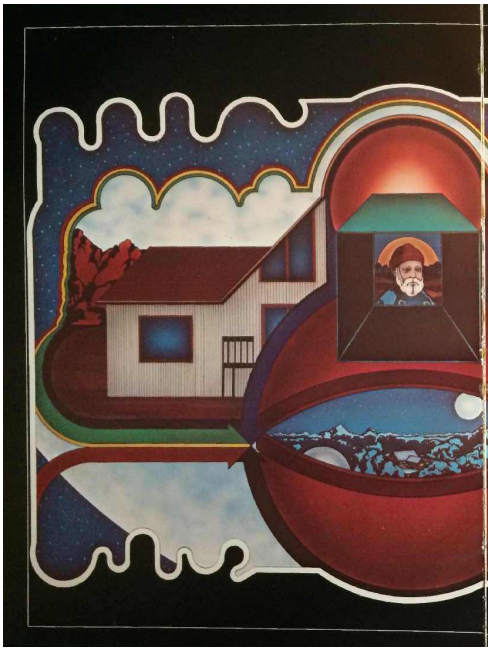
This is particularly interesting in terms of the author's remarks on the state of the environmental movement and the dangers of the holy crusade attitude in human affairs ("we're right and you're wrong" leaves very little room for accommodation). By *Children of Dune*, the noble ecological crusade launched by Paul Atreides at the end of the first book, has become an excuse for a religiously-based fascist government (run by a high priestess, Paul's corrupted sister Alia). Even the ecological transformation itself has turned sour, weakening the will of the people it was meant to strengthen, threatening the very basis of the economy it was meant to improve.

And yet he has not abandoned his ecological ideals: far from it. He speaks out harshly against the people who are pushing for more atomic power plants ("the most outrageous lies are being told by people who pretend to be honorable. The grossest lie of all is that we have no alternatives. We have many alternatives, but the reins to them cannot be held centrally. That's the real issue"). He walks through the woods on his property breaking off the tower limbs of trees, grinding them up in a "chipper" so the nutrients can return to the soil more quickly explaining that this is something wild animals

used to do, in effect, helping the soil restore itself, and now that the process has been slowed for 80 or 90 years with the coming of man and depopulation of forest animals, well, he's trying to help catch up with what would have been the normal cycle of soil restoration.

Frank Herbert grew up in the back country of northwest Washington, went off to be a newspaper reporter, eventually achieved great success with his science fiction novels and came back to build himself a fancy home in the country. It sounds like a simple story: but when you visit Frank Herbert, you find a man who acts like he is involved in the most important work of his life. His brain teems with ideas and insights, and *he is putting them into practice*. His house in the country is a demonstration project – a model for more effective, less energy-expensive ways of living on the planet. He is acting out his vision, presenting new possibilities that may be acceptable to people on both sides of the thorny environmental issues that he helped call to our attention in the first place.

It's just a matter of being awake to the possibilities. You don't have to be a hero to change the world.



A Visit With Frank Herbert

Paul Williams

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The author of the *Dune* trilogy lives at the end of a dirt road, on the edge of a city, in a world largely of his own making. He and his wife Beverly have a six-acre farm on the Olympic Peninsula in northwest Washington State that they have turned into a "demonstration project" in ecological living and efficient energy use.

Mile High Futures,1985

Historian of Dune, by Leanne C. Harper, Mile High Futures, 1985

I first met Paul Atreides in the early Seventies. Since then I have returned to Dune *many times. The man who gave* Dune *to me and millions of others is, of course, Frank Herbert.*

Frank Herbert is a writer who uses his background in journalism to provide the mass of facts which underlie his work. He is not lost on some plane of imagination but in fact, keenly interested in the events transpiring on our *planet. These things come together to form the basis of his novels:* Dune *(first published in 1965) and its four sequels (the fifth,* Chapterhouse Dune *will be published in the spring of 1985), along with* Under Pressure*,* Destination: Void*,* The Jesus Incident *and many others.*

Q: What I'd like you to do first of all is give a thumbnail description of *Dune*, both the book and the movie.

A: Number one, you want to warn your readers that this is not a comic book for the screen the way *Star Wars* was. This is a story about the creation of a messiah on a wilderness planet in the biblical sense. The wilderness of the *Bible*, of course, was the desert. It is a very heavily textured film. It is visually beautiful. I kept wanting to freeze-frame sections of it and saying I want that one on my wall

and that one and… I may very well get some of them.

Q: That's great.

A: It is also a very moving, mystical film as you know from having seen it.

Q: Could you talk for just a moment about the story?

A: My theory is that charismatic leaders ought to come with a wanting on their foreheads that says "may be danger to to your health." If you follow a leader without question, you can wind up in Guyana drinking poison Kool-Aid. Or you can wind up in the rice paddies of Viet Nam because you said yes, Mr. Kennedy. You see?

Q: I take it from your comments that you are happy with the final cut of the film as it appears in the theatres?

A: Oh, delighted with it. It creates that charismatic leader, that messiah, on film precisely the way I did it in the book. Have you read the book too?

Q: Of course.

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Q: I think it's very different. I certainly hope the philosophy that you and David Lynch have used with this catches on. I am not a rabid *Star Wars* fan. For what it is, it's fine but .. .

A: It's a comic book for the screen, it really is. I kid people. I say what I missed most in *Star Wars* were the balloons saying "pow" and "bang."

Q: It's not what I love most about science fiction.

A: Hell, no. What science fiction is is a setting where you can tell a unique story, a story that could not be told under any other circumstances. It's an experience that you couldn't have under any other circumstances.

Q: Which is the wonderful thing about it.

A: Of course it is. It's the thing that attracts the real fans. If you want to go into mainstream, you could not shoot Nordoff and Hall's *Hurricane* on the streets of New York City. You need the South Pacific island, don't you? The setting is as much a character as the people in the film. And that's true of science fiction, good science fiction, too.

Q: I was wondering, particularly with the current Middle Eastern situations, if you saw a modern-day equivalent in the Mideast now to some of the situations on *Dune*?

A: Of course. Any time the religion becomes the government, then when you break a law, you are sinning. That's the ultimate rule of following the leader without question, isn't it? Because if you have a leader up there saying God speaks in my left ear and I am telling you what God says, a leader of that kind is ultimately the most dangerous kind of leader.

Q: What do you see, from your research, happening in the Mideast?

A: I see that the more things change, the more they become the same. I see the recurrence of the ago-old human madness of following a leader without question. Investing your own energies in somebody else's decision-making. And that is a sure way to destruction.

Q: I wanted to talk too about your writing. You've done *Chapterhouse Dune*, the sixth sequel to the original *Dune*.

A: Yes, it comes out in March.

Q: You've written a number of sequels to *Dune*. What are you trying to accomplish with those sequels?

A: I'm a kind of commentator on the current scene. In *Chapterhouse* I have a collision between two enormously powerful forces. If you want to read the Soviet Union and the U.S. into be my guest.

Q: It would not be out of place?

A: It would not be out of place. I use the vehicle of the *Dune Chronicles* as an entertaining story form because if you don't entertain, who the hell is going to read you? So I am number one entertainer. Just as you are. Just as any good journalist is. There is no such thing as absolutely objective reporting. I learned that very early on as a journalist. You always screen it through your own experiences and those experiences color what you do. I decided that I was going to build my own audience and entertain them to the hilt, as much as I could. Now when somebody comes in and pays eighteen bucks for a book I've written, owe them a good read. Otherwise I'm cheating my readers. And I don't believe in cheating my readers I believe in challenging them: okay, play this game with me.

Q: Which is always to be appreciated by the readers, I think.

A: I have a particular kind of readership. I'm talking to them right straight across, eye to eye, and not down. I also listen to them. I read my fan mail and I send no form letters. Everybody who writes me gets an individual letter back.

Q: That must take an enormous amount of time.

A: A computer helps. But if there is a question that has not been answered before, I have answer it. Otherwise we can go to the computer for the same questions: how do you pronounce this, why did you do this, where did you get this idea, that sort of thing. I have answers in the computer for all of these questions. We can bring them out and go to the letter and answer those specific questions with i words. And my computer prints it. I read it and make sure it's right and sign it. I read every letter.

Q: Do you ever feel you have been trapped in the *Dune* series?

A: Oh, Hell no. No more than a good journalist is trapped by his readership. I have an audience out there and I talk to them.

Q: Many people after they have been doing something for a long time get bored with it. You certainly don't seem to have lost any interest at all.

A: I will write these stories as long as I enjoy them and my readers enjoy them.

Q: Something that I understand that you have done at your home is to put a lot of your philosophies into action.

A: I did up until about three years ago when Bev (Mr. Herbert's late wife) became increasingly very, very ill. Then I put a lot of that on the back burner. I'll go back to it. I'm in California right now, as you probably know. That's temporary.

Q: You have a house there in Washington state which is based on sound ecological principles?

A: An ecological experiment station would be the best way to describe it. I try things out. It was an existing home because most of our dwellings in the United States and elsewhere are existing dwellings. So what do we do about them? How do we make than more efficient? That's the game I've been playing.

Q: What about any new projects that you are working on now?

A: I'm plotting the seventh *Dune* book right now.

Q: And other works? I know that you have done at least a couple of

books with Bill Ransom.

A: I'll do another one with him. I am doing a collaboration with my eldest son, Brian Herbert, right now. He's sold five books on his own.

Q: There is one coming out in January: *The Garbage Chronicles*.

A: That's right. He's very, sharp wit, a very funny man. We're doing a pastiche on some of the most dearly held cliches of science fiction. Were having fun with it.

Q: Anything else that that you would like to mention?

A: Yes, I want to make sure that you understand that I may put a pot of message in there with the mess of pottage but I'm primarily an entertainer. I want to entertain people; I want to challenge them at the same time.

Q: That is to be respected both as an aim and how you have achieved it. Thank you very much.

FRANK HERBERT: Historian of DUNE

Interviewed by Leanne C. Harper

I first met Paul Atreides in the early Seventies. Since then I have returned to Dune many times. The man who gave DUNE to me and millions of others is, of course, Frank Herbert.

Frank Herbert is a writer who uses his background in journalism to provide the mass of facts which underlie his work. He is not lost on some plane of imagination but is, in fact, keenly interested in the events transpiring on our planet. These things come together to form the basis of his novels: DUNE (first published in 1965) and its four sequels (the fifth, CHAPTERHOUSE DUNE will be published in the spring of 1985), along with UNDER PRESSURE, DESTINATION: VOID, THE JESUS INCIDENT and many others.

Q. What I'd like you to do first of all is give a thumbnail description of DUNE, both the book and the movie.

A. Number one, you want to warn your readers that this is not a comic book for the screen the way STAR WARS was. This is a story about the creation of a messiah on a wilderness planet in the biblical sense. The wilderness of the Bible, of course, was the desert. It is a very heavily textured film. It is visually beautiful. I kept wanting to freeze-frame sections of it and saying I want that one on my wall and that one and . . . I may very well get some of them.

Q. That's great.

A. It is also a very moving, mystical film as you know from having seen it.

Q. Could you talk for just a moment about the story?

A. My theory is that charismatic leaders ought to come with a warning on their foreheads that says "may be dangerous to your health." If you follow a leader without question, you can wind up in Guyana drinking poison Kool-Aid. Or you can wind up in the rice paddies of Viet Nam because you said yes, Mr. Kennedy. You see?

Q. I take it from your comments that you are happy with the final cut of the film as it appears in the theatres?

A. Oh, I'm delighted with it. It creates that charismatic leader, that messiah, on film precisely the way I did it in the book. Have you read the book too?

Q. Of course.

A. Then you know it begins as DUNE begins. You hear my dialogue all the way through it. The ending is consistent. They had to cut it. The only way this film could have been made was to spend a lot of money on it and they obviously did. The only way anybody would do that was if you made a theatre film. That meant that they had to cut it down. I imagine that if you did every scene from DUNE on a film, you'd have at least a fourteen hour film, maybe twenty hours. We already have about five hours of film. They may put it back together as a mini-series in about three years.

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Kyle Mac Lachlan as Paul with Frank Herbert.

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Continued on p.4.

Duniverse, Space Voyager, 1985

by Neil Gaiman, Space Voyager #14, 1985

As Dune *now hits our regional cinemas, it seems likely that there will be a* Dune 2*. So Neil Gaiman interviewed Frank Herbert, saw the film and talked to some of the stars, the director and producer.*

You do get a lot of rubbish in publicity handouts; the one that they sent me for the *Dune* film begins ”Frank Herbert's science-fiction book *Dune*, first published. in 1965 was that troubled decade's literary lodestar”, and goes on to explain that it was a ”life-affirming metaphor: in which positive human potential, developed to its highest power, prevails ultimately over even the most deeply

entrenched evil.”

Dune wasn't the ”literary lodestar” of the Sixties. But it is one of the best-selling SF books ever, a complex mixture of intrigue, adventure, mysticism, religion and ecology; a fat and satisfying book that has spawned four sequels, with at least two to follow. And now it's been made into a film starring Sting, Sian Phillips, and newcomer Kyle Maclachlan as hero Paul Atreides.

I spoke to author Frank Herbert about both the book and the film on his recent visit to England. He's an American ex-journalist, science fiction writer for over thirty years.

How much was he consulted during the making of the film?

"Every step of the way. I went down to the Mexican desert where they were filming, acting as technical adviser. I saw the four major cuts of the movie, and made my suggestions to them, some of which were followed. They made a commitment to be as close to the book as they could, and they did – they carried out their promise. In one sense I had a big club in my hand and never waved it. That is that there are approximately sixty million people out there who have read *Dune,* and so all I had to do was murmur quietly 'remember the facts."

"It is *Dune*. They've got it. It begins as *Dune* begins, it ends as *Dune* ends, and you can hear my dialogue all the way through it. My only objection is that they cut out one character, Count Fenring, and one scene I would have loved to have had, the banquet scene. But I know why they did that, it's a time consideration. It's a two hour and twenty minute film; if they had shot every scene in the book it would take at least fourteen hours. David Lynch (the director and writer) deserves full credit for solving how to translate *Dune* to the screen.

How closely did they work together on it?

"Oh, David milked my brain like a farmer with a cow in a stall. After seeing *Elephant Man* I just knew in my guts we had the right man, capable of doing it. And David taught me how to write screenplays. It was a real rapport, I taught him a lot about Dune, he taught me a lot about scriptwriting.

Original Concepts

Where did his original ideas for *Dune* come from?

"I suppose, from my study of history. It's my belief that Messiahs ought to have a label on

their foreheads, 'Warning – may be dangerous to your health!' Not that Messiahs individually are bad, all of them, but inevitably they create power structures, and other human beings come to absorb those power structures. My view of history is that we are fools to follow any leader without question; the power structure develops, and power structures attract the corruptible. It's not true that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. I don't believe that. What I do believe is that power attracts people who are corruptible. Adolf Hitler. Gaddafi. Richard Nixon – he's one of my heroes: Nixon taught us a marvelous lesson, he taught us to distrust government, and he did it by example. And that's a lesson we need to have recurrently.

"I conceived *Dune*, *Dune Messiah* and *Childen of Dune* as one book. The structure for the first three books was already in my head when I started – not just in my head, but on paper. The structure of it was to create a Messianic leader, who people would follow for all the right reasons, whose activity produces that power structure, then show the devolution of it – in other words flip the story over with the middle book, then show where the devolution goes in the third book. The next generation, the passing along of the power.

So how did the fourth and fifth books come about?

“Well, the fourth one came about because I couldn't get the character out of my head. Leto, the God-Emperor. | kept wondering what it would be like to have a civilisation ruled by one person for thousands of years. The mindless monster together with the human being, wearing the same flesh. And one thing an author has in reserve is that he can write the character into a book and kill him off. Which I did, of course.“

I told him that my favourite of the series, after the first couple, is the latest, *Heretics of Dune*.

The Atomic Worm

”Yeah, I really enjoyed' writing that one. You’ll enjoy the sixth one, *Chapterhouse Dune*, then. The sandworm that they took with them when the planet Arrakis was destroyed has all kinds of offspring now, so we have explosive growth. The atomic worm.”

Now, the three great campus classics of the Sixties were probably *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *Lord of the Rings* and *Dune*. Why did he think those three books captured the public imagination in the way they did?

”I'm not sure. I really am not. I've been asked this question about *Dune* a lot of times, and with *Dune* I think it's because you can follow the action on a lot of levels, on any level that appeals to you. As far as Heinlein's work goes, it was a popularisation of a childhood fantasy – "Big Daddy will take care of you. *Lord of the Rings* is a translation of the Arthurian legend. And I based a lot of *Dune* on

Arthurian Legend – | had equivalent characters: the Prince in search of the grail; the witch queen; the wise old man; the fool (in the tarot sense, not in a contemporary pejorative sense); the magician, the one who could talk to animals; and so on. The archetypes are all there, and I did that

deliberately.

And does he feel these levels all come across in the film?

”I think so. What you get out of the film depends on your age and sophistication. Kids may go to see the baddies slashed and the war, and the bad man floating in the air. People are going to go to see the love story. Other people are going to see the adventure story, or the mystical story, the creation of the messiah, and all that.“

Will people who enjoyed the book be disappointed by the film?

He shook his head. ”I think the fans will react as | did. People say 'are the visualisations true to my imagination?' And the answer is, some of them are, some of them aren't, and a lot of them are better! Carlo Rambaldi didn't win his Oscars (for Special Achievement Visual Effects on *King Kong*, *Alien* and *E.T.*) for sitting at home playing with clay. David Lynch started out as an artist, a painter. The film itself is a visual feast – you want to stop the frame occasionally and hang that one on your wall!”

Religion in Dune

We begin to talk about the various religion in *Dune*.

”They are all evolutionary projections out of current religions. And 'The Orange Catholic Bible' is my own private joke. Personally I avoid organised religion. My own belief is that we live in a holographic universe – | think every element of the universe contains the whole – and one of the assumptions out of this is that nothing is ever lost, at least in some form. No good, no evil: nothing is ever lost. So what do you put into that cosmic hologram? My own personal choice is to live by the Golden Rule – try not to do to others those things you would not like them to do to you – not always successfully, I'm afraid. But I think that if only one person in our universe or in this world does this then it is a better world, so we ought to do it. But not as a preachy ’You’re a bad guy because you don't.' It has to be a personal choice. Made for personal reasons, not because somebody laid it on you.”

In the *Dune* books society frowns on technology, and Spock-like human computers, Mentats, do much of the work that would now be done by technology. Does he have any dislike of high-tech?

”I don't think that it's the axe that cuts down the forest. It's how the tool is used. You have to be pretty dense to think it's the tool that is at fault. I believe that – progress is the wrong word – I believe that the evolution of technology is inevitable. Progress is a peculiar word. It's a windowscreen we pull down to hide the future from ourselves. It's the sort of word that doctors use, you know 'How is the patient doing?' 'Progressing marvellously’ when in fact the guy just died

”You know, I started out in history, and it’s always fascinated me, through omniverous reading. You can see certain cyclical elements

in history – we meet ourselves coming around, like the Worm Ouroboros. But we don't truly repeat precisely – it's more of a spiral than a circle, like a spring. And that's human progress.

Enthusiasm

”It's like my book, *Dragon in the Sea*. People read that and ask if I was being prophetic. I say, no. I was just writing about something that, it was clear to me, was happening. It was 1954 but I could see that there were going to be oil shortages. I said that in the book. And there was. I said that it was going to get better then worse. And it is. But it's obvious if you study history. If you're a historian of any merit at all, you see the currents. A good navigator in a river gets to read the currents and knows where the rocks are. A good historian does the same thing.”

His enthusiasm for Dune and the forth-coming film is very infectious. He is an excellent PR. Well, the agreement that we had was that if I didn't like it, I didn't have to say anything. If I liked it I'd be delighted to go out and say so. And I like it. That's the bottom line.

What are his plans for the future?

”To continue working. I enjoy working. I’m doing screenplays – we're already working on the sequel, *Dune Messiah*, and I'm working on a collaboration with my son. it's his sixth book And I'll do a seventh *Dune* book (probably the last, but I'll never say never again on the *Dune* series). And I try to keep a free-flowing, ever-changing attitude to the world, which | think everyone ought to have. | went through a

recent traumatic event – the death of a wife I have loved very much for a long time. My reaction to this was to get myself into better physical condition; I lost fifty pounds (only four ounces of which was the beard, I swear to you!) and I put my life back on the rails. I'm alive. And I'm doing what | want to do."

—

How do you catch a cloud and hold it down? How do you keep a wave upon the sand? How How do you hold a moonbeam in your hand?

And – last, but not least – how do you turn a 800-page book (which has been read by an estimated sixty million people, and which is crammed choc-a-block full of high intrigue, complex characters and enough plot to keep Coronation Street going for the next three thousand years) into a two-hour film? With great difficulty, that's how. Not that *Dune* is unfilmable; you'd simply need an eighteen hour film. But David Lynch, aided and abetted by Rafaella de Laurentis, has done his best.

The Story

The story of the film is the story of an emerging messiah, Paul Atreides (Kyle MacLachlan). Paul is the end result of a many thousand-year genetic breeding program instituted by the Bene Gesserit sisterhood with the aim of creating the Kwisatz Haderach, a being able to see into the future, possessed of many supernormal

powers, able to see into that place which, we are informed, women are unable to look.

Paul's mother, the Lady Jessica (Francesca Annis) was Bene Gesserit trained herself, and was meant to have borne a daughter to her husband, Duke Leto (Jürgen Prochnow), head of the House Atreides and ruler of Caladan. The daughter would have been married to a male heir of the Harkonnens, hereditary enemies of the Atreides, and brought peace between the two families; then, in her turn, the daughter would have produced a son – perhaps the legendary *Kwisatz Haderach*. Out of love for Duke Leto, Jessica disobeyed the sisterhood and had Paul instead.

The Atreides are becoming too popular. Now the Emperor of the Known Universe Shaddam IV (José Ferrer), has allied with evil House Harkonnen to bring down the House Atreides: Arrakis, also known as Dune, is a desert planet and the only source of the Spice Melange (without which much of the Universe would be in great difficulty) long been run by the Harkonnens; The Emperor appoints the Atreides as new rulers, while plotting with the Harkonnens to destroy the Atreides.

As the film begins much of this is explained in a rapid resume by the voice of the Princess Irulan, daughter of the Emperor. We then meet one of the grossly deformed Third-Stage Navigators of the Spacing Guild, warped and changed by continual exposure to the spice (without which the navigators cannot predict the future and thus transport ships through space). It has come to warn the Emperor that the Guild will not countenance anything that would endanger the safe production of the spice, that the Guild will only go along with the Emperor's plan if he ensures that the Atreides

heir, Paul is killed.

Meanwhile, on Caladan, Paul receives a visit from the Reverend

Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam (Sian Phillips), a Bene Gesserit big shot equipped with a poisoned needle – the gom jabbar – and a pain-inducing box. He passes her test: could he be the Kwisatz Haderach? He has been having odd dreams of the future, and of a planet called Dune which would tend to indicate something of the kind. Dune/Arrakis, is a waterless planet, inhabited by nomadic warriors called Fremen who owe their existence to their hyper-efficient water conserving garments called stillsuits: the Fremen have a prophecy that one day The Promised One will come and lead them in holy war against the universe. Apart from the Fremen and the sand Arrakis his little else to offer except for enormous sandworms – huge creatures up to a mile long.

Shortly after the Atreides arrival on Arrakis they are betrayed by the Harkonnens, who have suborned loyal Doctor Yueh (Dean Stockwell). The Harkonnens, led by Baron Vladimir (Kenneth MacMillan), look like red-headed punk black-dressed Michelin men. They kill Duke Leto, and The Beast Rabban (Paul Smith), one of the Baron's nephews, takes over as planetary head.

Paul and his mother flee into the desert, where, after a close encounter with a sandworm, they are adopted by Stilgar (Everett McGill) and his Fremen warriors. Paul trains the Fremen to use the Atreides vocal weapons, and they launch a commando-style war of attrition against the Harkonnens, bringing the spice production to a halt. Meanwhile the pregnant Lady Jessica has drunk the Water of Life and become a Reverend Mother, and Paul has drunk the same mysterious liquid (a form of pure spice) and seen into that area that women can't go (it looks a bit like an oily pool) becoming the Kwisatz Haderach.

The Emperor, on the orders of the Spacing Guild, invades Dune, intending to destroy all life on the planet. He decapitates Rabban and castigates the Baron. But Paul (now called Muad’dib) is many

steps ahead of him. With atomic weapons, sandworms and thousands of worm-riding warriors he moves in, and after a pitched battle, defeats the Emperor's forces. (The Baron, meanwhile, has floated out of a window and been eaten by a worm). At this point Paul has a knife-fight with the Baron's only surviving nephew, Feyd Rautha (Sting) (a Harkonnen who, until now has done little except stand in a stream bath with almost nothing on, looking pretty) and defeats him. Paul takes over as Emperor, marrying the Princess Irulan (remember her?) and, to symbolise the astounding changes, causes it to rain on Arrakis for the first time in living memory.

The Review

Visually, it is a treat. The sets are magnificent, and designed to show the different aspects of the different planets. The Emperor's palace, all jade and gold, like a Renaissance cathedral; the Atreides castle on Caladan, built entirely of wood; The industrialised Harkonnen world of Giedi Prime, all metal boxes floating on an oily sea, for all the world like a gasworks that has grown to engulf a planet; Arrakis itself, crudely hewn rock and vast sandy deserts. The special effects, as one has come to expect in modern cinema, are impressive often so well done that one merely takes them for granted.

The Harkonnens are fabulous – the baddest, most wickedest, evillest, cruellest, unpleasantest family to appear on the screen for years: the Baron, floating around in mid-air, corpulent, diseased and insanely destructive; The Beast Rabban, a mindless sadist who dines on squashed rodents and pieces of horse; Feyd, lovely gay shiv artist; and their corps of retainers – many with eyes and ears sewn up to ensure secrecy, all fitted with easily removable heart-plugs which fountain blood when pulled out.

The Guild Navigators, in their black plastic macs with their brooms, tubes from nose to skull, misshapen brains bulging from their craniums, on their way to becoming the tanked tadpole-like foetus creatures that control all Man's travel through space.

The incredible feeling of age and permanence about much of the set, the gloomy, foreign feel to much of the photography. All of these, and more, impress, entertain, amuse, and occasionally awe.

But there are other parts of the film that just do not come off.

The plot can easily befuddle or bemuse those who haven't read the book or aren't prepared to simply sit back and enjoy. Some parts of it are too simplistic, others far too complicated for easy digestion. The intrusive voice-overs, internal voices which are an integral part of the Dune books, are simply irritating as a screen device. The script suffers from the attempt to keep

Frank Herbert's original plot intact – especially since parts of the film removed in the cutting room often also take with them motivation or vital story information.

The Fremen desert sequences, which in the book act to bring home both the ecological side of the Fremen existance, (conserving

water, worshipping the worms as both devil and god), and also make credible the changes in Paul and Jessica here seems to have become yet another "exiled good guy teaches primitive people how to master super-weapon out in the desert and two years later…" – simplistic in the extreme. The film's end has been cut to ribbons; the film sometimes drags; the dialogue is often so bad it gets laughs – uneasy laughs – from a septical audience. Perhaps the film is too straight-faced, since wherever it has humour (as in the splattery sequences of the ghastly Harkonnens) it comes to life.

Perhaps that is what comes of trying to squeeze a story into a container just too small for it – the plot becomes too complex, the characters too straightforward.

But if you haven't seen it, and you are a science fiction fan (and if you aren't you really shouldn't be reading *Space Voyager*. Check out *Horse and Hound* or *Practical Gardening* instead), *Dune* is a must.

The Press Conference

They came in one by one, David Lynch (Director), Rafaella de Laurentiis (Producer and daughter of the famous Dino), Francesca Annis (Lady Jessica), Sian Phillips (Reverend Mother Helen Mohiam), Kyle MacLachlan (Paul Atreides), and sat themselves down on a dais in front of the press corps. They all seemed cheerful and unruffled, despite most of them having just flown in from another premiere. Rafaella was younger than | had expected a pretty, blonde Italian in her early twenties; Kyle McLachlan had lost the severe haircut of the film and looked more human, less like a clean-thinking tailor's dummy – I'd never have recognised him; David Lynch was in his late thirties, rumpled and laid-back; Sian Phillips and Francesca Annis – as befitted the British contingent – were poised, beautiful and nearly regal.

The questioners started with Francesca Annis. Does she like science fiction? What did she think of her part?

"I don't like science fiction, although I do want to read the rest of the *Dune* books. But my first thought when I saw the script was just that it was a wonderful script and a great part. (To be honest, there was more in the original script for me than you see on the screen). The

marvelous thing was the changes the character goes through in the story – it was a part with a beginning, a middle and an end."

Wasn't she a bit young to be playing the mother of a twenty-four year old son? She, hesitated, then giggled.

"That's due to something called the Spice Melange. It doesn't come out in the film too much, but in the book the Spice is also an anti-aging drug."

Next journalist. "I know," she began, "that Mr. McLachlan has read the book every year since he was thirteen…" (She was quoting the press handout. "That's a bit of an exaggeration, actually", confessed Kyle), …but coming cold to the film as | did | found it virtually incomprehensible! Has a lot been cut out of the original script?"

Sian Phillips answered. "I read the book and the script and honestly I found the script easier to understand than the book… but to be honest I did something I've only done twice in my career, and that was to accept the part without first reading the script – on the basis that I've known Rafaella since she was a girl…"

Francesca Annis: "I didn't find the script confusing, but then again, after a year of it I'd have to be a bit dumb if I didn't understand it by now. On seeing the film | have to take other people's words for it that they find it confusing. And of course things *have* been cut out from the original script. But quite frankly I think the important thing is whether or not people find it boring. I've been with people who came out of the film going 'OH WOW!' and you say to them 'Did you understand it?' and they say (awed voice) 'Oh no. – But I really want to read the book and I really want to see it again!' I think the really

remarkable thing about the film is that it doesn't relate to the Sixties culture in the way that the book does."

David Lynch chipped in to point out that the book had sold over a quarter of a million copies in the US during the two weeks the film had been on release over there.

More questions. Did the women object to having their heads shaved? (Actually, they explained, it was just a make-up job, although Francesca had lost her eyebrows in an exploding gas oven accident during production). Was it uncomfortable, out in the desert, in those costumes? (Not unpredictably, yes, it was).

Most of the questions seemed rather trivial, so I chipped in a couple of my own. Did Lynch, as director and scriptwriter, feel the film was a success? "You bet I do!"

Did Rafaella expect the film to make its money back? After all, it is one of the most expensive films ever made.

"Actually, I do. And I think it'll do it a lot more easily than a lot of people seem to think."

There had been a lot of rumours about it being a commercial flop.

"No. It won't flop. It's too original. It doesn't look like anything that's been on the screen before. I think it's going to become a big cult movie."

Another journalist commented that the look of the film was very Italian. Was that Rafaella's influence? She smiled, shook her head, and pointed at the director. "If it looks Italian it's his fault – not mine!" "Actually the look of the thing was influenced by Italy," Lynch explained. "We had some script conferences there, and I was taken around Venice for the first time. And in the book there's a very. old feeling, even though it's set in the future. And that was the feeling I had in Venice, so I used that in the film."

Sting's part was fairly small. Had it been cut a lot? somebody wanted to know.

"Pretty much all of it is there." David Lynch began. (Rafaella interrupted, 'There *are* some English cuts….') Lynch again, "There's one scene with the Beast Rabban in a bathtub, where he stands up and smashes one of those floating lights overhead and it rains down a black fluid on him. It was a beautiful scene, but those beautiful scenes sometimes stop the movie, so they have to go. But the scenes that were cut weren't cut because the film had to be a certain length but because they aided the balance of the film."

"Yeah, but the British censors cut some scenes," Rafaella told him. "There's one shot of Sting at the end with a knife through his open mouth – and there's the scene where the heart-stopper is pulled out by the Baron."

Me again. Did David Lynch have a lot of trouble condensing an

eight-hundred page book into a two hour screenplay?

”I had nothing but trouble for a year and a half, doing six or seven drafts of the screenplay. I was rewriting during shooting, and then in the editing | was recutting it, trying to keep it comprehensible for people while still keeping it moving and remaining faithful to the spirit of the book.”

”It's the trickiest, hardest thing I've ever done and maybe ever will do. But | think it’s right. It's true to the book, and that's what we set out to do.”

There was much more. We learned that all the stars had been contracted for *Dune Messiah*, the sequel – and that David and Rafaella wanted to make another movie each before starting work on it. That the other five *Dune* books had been optioned. That Frank Herbert had liked the design o the Guild Navigator so much he had requested some stills of it be sent to him as research while he wrote the seventh *Dune* book. That Kyle MacLachlan wasn't expecting to be recognised as a star, but that when going through Italian customs that morning one customs officer had said to another 'Don't search him – he's the guy with the giant worms!' That the sets David Lynch had built for the film were so complete and detailed it was like being in another world in fact rather than in fiction.

After the press conference proper was over, the principals mingled, and I stopped to talk to David Lynch, in company with The Editor of *Space Voyager* Herself. He admitted that *Dune Messiah* was his favourite of the books (mine too, | told him) and the one he was most looking forward to filming.

And the Editor got to ask him the question she'd been muttering to herself ever since she had seen the movie that morning.

”If it's so far in the future,” she asked, ”why haven't they invented the lightbulb? It was so *dark*!”

For the first time in the Press Conference, David Lynch seemed lost for words.

Source: https://www.facebook.com/DuneInfo/photos/ms.c.eJw1y9sNADAIAsCNGtQquv9ifRq~_LgATIZ5QoOAcvDZk0Elry~_kF0~-.bps.a.780615235342447.1073741838.104857709584873/780615802009

Different Worlds Interview, 1985

Different Worlds, 1985

After twenty-two rejections from most of the major publishing houses, Frank Herbert finally found someone with faith in the first chapter of his magnum opus *at the Chilton Book Company. That was twenty-five years and 13 million sales ago.*

After winning every major award the science-fiction field has to offer, it only took ten years for someone to option the rights to make a film. Fifteen years after that first option, a motion picture version of the novel voted the "Best Science-Fiction Novel Ever Written" has been released. It may not be the best science-fiction film ever made, but it is near the top of the heap.

Dune*, the film, is a major accomplishment for the modern cinema. It is nearly unbelievable that such a staggering beautiful and powerful film could have been produced at this time, given the state of of the science-fiction film these days, but it was, and most everyone connected with the production is pleased as can be.*

Rather than go on at length over the film's merits, however, this issue we decided to leave that to someone else. We were able to meet author Frank Herbert for an hour during which he discussed both his novel, and the breathtaking bit of wonder which has been produced from it.

Q: I know you feel David Lynch really pulled the film together beautifully. Is there anything special about his background that you feel made him exceptionally perfect for *Dune*?

A: You know David was an oil painter; he comes into movies from a strange direction. People ask me if the sets match my original vision of it all, and to be truthful I have to say some do, and some don't, and some are better.

Q: None worse?

A: No, not at all.

Q: Then he's matched or topped your own interpretations throughout?

A: Yes, as far as the visuals are concerned. But what would you expect with Tony Masters as the art director, for Gods sake? He didn't win the Oscars sitting home twiddling his thumbs.

Q: What was his best achievement – what did the bring to the screen so perfectly you just couldn't believe it?

A: The Great Hall. It was absolutely beautiful. I just stood there and said, “boy.” And the castle at Caladan was magnificent. It was a real metaphor for the feudal society I had postulated.

Q: And the creatures and the costumes, how does it all come across?

A: Oh, God, the costumes are eye-sockers! They did a great job with all the artifacts; they really did. They want all out for everything. At the wrap party, a lot of the actors and actresses and technical people kept coming up to me to tell me how sorry they were it was over.

Q: Well, you do seem happy about the way things went.

A: I am absolutely delighted. I’d heard so many horror stories about books being butchered by being made into a film, and had science-fiction films coming from De Laurentiis, but this is not one. All the characters of *Dune* are in it – it’s not a comic book for the screen at all.

Q: The performers are responsible for the character development to a large part. Was there anyone who did such a remarkable job they brought tears to your eyes?

A: I thought Freddie Jones in the Thurfir Hawat part really did a super job. And (Kenneth) McMillan as the Baron is absolutely hideous. You hate him.

Q: You're supposed to.

A: Yes, yes. And the same with Sting. He wasn't a pretty face with naught behind it – he was everything Feyd is supposed to be. Francesca Annis was also a surprise to me. When I met her at the first night I was in Mexico City (where most of the principal photography for the movie was shot), and I looked at this beautiful woman and thought, "My God, she's Jessica!" there was no doubt about it. Now I thought Kyle MacLachlan did a bang-up job as Paul; he wasn't the way I had visualized Paul, but the spirit and the intensity are there – he plays the part. He dominates the screen when he's on it.

Q: Which is helpful, considering that this is Paul's story. Which makes it a good time to ask you what that story is. Where did *Dune* come from? How did you decide to write such a book? Where did all the background com from? Start anywhere you like.

A: I was going to do a story an the messianic impulse in human society. Why do we follow charismatic leaders? I had a small insight once, that charismatic leaders are dangerous, and that we should

question them because they are just people and can make mistakes. But the mistakes of the human being as leader are amplified by those who follow him without question. So I decided I would explore this propensity human beings have to do things like go to Jonestown and drink Kool-Aid. You get a mad leader, and that madness is actually contagious. People follow such people and I could see there was a story in there, so I started doing my research. Comparative religions, anthropology, you name it.

Now at the same time, I went down to a Department of Agriculture experimental station on the coast of Oregon to do a newspaper story on their work. They had been extremely successful in developing ways to control the movement of sand dunes. In fact, successful to the point that there were delegations from all over the world to learn from us. I look at this; I flow over it, took photographs form the air, and it got me interested in how we inflict ourselves on this planet. And then, about a year later, I woke up to the fact that I had a perfect setting for the story I wanted to tell. A planet which as entirely dunes, entirely desert. So I finally started to concentrate on the kinds of research I was doing. Desert ecology, geology, the flora and fauna of same, and then, I went down to the Sonora Desert and lived for a while so I could experience it all first hand.

Q: How long ‘a while’?

A: About three month.

Q: Are we talking about driving out from the hotel every day and kicking around?

A: No. We are talking about renting a place out in the desert, off of a dirt road. Living with the roadrunners and the rattlesnakes and all the rest around you. There's a lot of life in the desert.

Q: So, after all that, were you ready to start writing?

A: No, not really. I hadn't finished loading the system, as I call it, getting together all the information I would need to give me that sense of verisimilitude of what it would really be like to live in a place where water was so precious that people did not cry, that the body was salvaged for its water after death, and so on. So I went back to the drawing board, and took some more books out of the library, and I also developed a system of going to the experts. Being a fairly good interviewer, I would go knocking on professors' doors and say, "Hey, you know something I'd like to know. I can do something for both of us; I'll get an article out of you, which will be published," which is all professors need, "and I'll get the information I need." We would knock out articles in a week most of them swear they couldn't have written in three months. And they got published and I got what I needed.

Q: So, then…

A: Then, I sat down, and started to write. And a year and a half later,

I had a book.

Q: How long before the public had the same book?

A long time. It was turned down twenty-two times.

Q: Twenty-two times, eh?

A: That's right.

Q: We'll leave the implications of that one alone for now and try to concentrate on the story itself, and not on the story behind it. When did you decide you hadn't told everything there was to tell and start on *Dune Messiah*?

Well, the three books were always one story in my head. I had written parts of *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune* before *Dune* was finished. Mostly because I knew where it was going, so I just went there.

Q: Did you plan the others that followed then?

A: No, I planned three books – to do a *rondelet*, to invert, because I was talking about the messianic impulse; that was the thrust of the original idea. So I wanted the create a very charismatic leader, who became a messiah, and you would follow the leader for the proper reasons, he was a great guy, you see. But then the power structure occurs; the theory about absolute power corrupting absolutely, I don't think that really nails it. I don't think that power always corrupts, but I do think that power attracts the corruptible. And so, when you get a power structure, you get a lot of people into it.

So I had the idea of taking this messiah, building the power structure around him, having the central book invert the whole picture of the charismatic leader. Then the third book gets to show the aftermath of it all.

Q: And that takes us far ahead of ourselves. After all, the film is only from the first book.

A: Correct. And not every scene of it is in the movie. You wouldn't sit for a fourteen-hour butt-killing epic, would you?

Q: The way this one looks, maybe four hours, but no, not fourteen. Of course, the director has said people should go and read the book before they see the film. Would you agree?

A: I would. Now, I'm pretty close to the book, but I had the weird experience of seeing the film, and having the sense that some of the scenes that were left out merely happen off stage.

Q: So you don't feel anything was missed?

A: Well, there was only one scene I would have liked that they did not include. The banquet scene. I understand the necessities of it – it did not fit the continuity of the script they had written, and it would have cost a lot of money, but David, in the final proof has done a magnificent job. The film begins as *Dune* begins, and it ends as *Dune* ends, and I hear my dialogue all the way through it.

Q: With so much missing, though, do you feel that maybe the film's major concentration is on the book's violence, and the sandworms, rather than on the core of the story as you described it earlier?

A: Oh, those things are there, and they really look marvelous, they really do – but the feel is for the politics and the people. David has a way – as he had in the *Elephant Man* – of giving you the feel of the situation, the attitudes of a people and an environment, without going into a lot of detail.

Q: So, the short of it is that we both agree. *Dune* the film is great, and you are very personally pleased with the way everything has

turned out.

A: Simple answer: yes.

Q: Then I'll wrap up with a whimsical question: if you could have stepped in front of the camera without feeling you'd be recognized, hiding out in the background somewhere, what scene would you have wanted to be in?

A: In the finale, in the confrontation scene between Feyd-Rautha and Paul. Just as one of, oh, the Fremen in the background.

Q: Well, it's a shame you didn't. I think you could have gotten away with it. People have been a little to caught up in the things to be watching for faces.

A: I hope so. Everything has gone just perfectly, as someone was up there watching over me. Before the whole project, I'd heard so many horror stories, but I went into it all with the feeling there had to be an exception to all the tales of woe sooner or later. I'm just delighted that *Dune* got to be the exception.

Source: TBD

The Other Frank Herbert, Stardate, 1985

by Charles Platt, Stardate,1985

The *Dune* books may have made more money than any other science fiction series, and they are forever identified with Frank Herbert's name. And yet, *Dune* remains only a small part of his life and work. There is another side to this best-selling novelist that has seldom been seen or described. This “other Frank Herbert” is very different from his public persona as an infectiously cheerful, aggressively sociable veteran of the talk-show circuits, expertly promoting himself with a practiced routine of quips and anecdotes. Herbert, in fact, is a very private man, who spends most of his time in retreat from being a best-selling novelist, in his custom-built, ecologically designed A-frame in the Pacific north-west. (He prefers that the location not be described any more specifically than this.) Here, he pursues an entirely separate vocation: an inventor and scientist, putting into practice the principles he writes about in his fiction.

Herbert believes in the power of the individual, and the ability of a self-taught amateur to compete on equal terms with highly-trained experts funded by huge corporations. This is not the usual empty claim of a pseudo-scientist or lone crackpot blaming the blinkered scientific establishment for refusing to acknowledge his “genius.” Herbert has a magpie's talent for gathering and storing useful items of knowledge, and he knows how to develop his ideas in economically feasible, real-world applications. His private research has scored dramatic successes in fields ranging from alternate energy sources to computer design.

The computer project is the most recent, and is still in development. “I wanted a system that was specifically tailored for creative writing,” he explains. “None of the systems on the market satisfied my criteria, because none of them was developed by a writer. So I started trying to develop the simplest, fastest, best word-processing computer possible. We’re currently in the third revision of the hardware. It's all hand-wired, you understand; you have to wire it by hand to develop the architecture. Once you establish that, then you can etch printed circuit boards.”

“Right now, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t. But when it's working, we know we're going in the right direction. And when I come back to the primitive present time, and use my Compaq, I know I’m using something less than what is possible.”

Working with him on this project is Max Barnard, an electronics engineer with whom Herbert collaborated on his nonfiction book about computers, *Without Me, You're Nothing.*

“There’s just the two of us, and we're entirely independent. And our aim extends well beyond word processing. Our idea is also to create a computer that almost anybody could program, using a graphic programming language. You see a picture, you push that key, and that picture tells you what it's going to do, the way road signs tell you what the road's going to do. This is far more helpful than an orthodox computer language consisting of words. With a picture, what you see is what you get.”

Herbert sees this language as a way to take programming out of the hands of the experts and bring computers under the control of people who use them.

“Let’s say, at Stanford Medical School, a doctor wants a particular kind of research program in his computer. He hires a programmer, who is not a doctor, and has to got some idea of what is required.

He approximates it, and the doctor says, ‘No. no. that's not what I wanted, it’s got to do this.’ So the programmer goes back to his drawing board, and comes back with something else, and finally – I’ve heard some of the doctors admit this – finally they just give up. They say, ‘Well, I’lll try to make this work.’”

“Now, if you could teach that doctor, in four or five days. how to make the computer do precisely what he wants it to do, he would sit down and program it himself.”

For a science fiction writer and an electronics engineer to develop a new computer and a new programming language in their spare time seems wildly ambitious. To Herbert, however, it's an exciting game rather than a formidable challenge. His infectious optimism and remarkable vitality tend to belittle any problem, as if he can overcome obstacles by willpower and force of personality alone.

With characteristic modesty he describes himself as a “farm boy” with relatively little formal education. This means that, whenever he has needed special knowledge, he has had to go out and get it himself. His design for a high-tech windmill was a case in point.

“It occurred to me that wind machines had not been redesigned fundamentally since windmills were introduced in Holland, centuries ago. We've learned a lot since then about the flow of air over laminar surfaces, as a result of designing airplanes. So I started researching that and adapting it to windmills.”

“I myself am not an aeronautics engineer, but I can read the research and make my models and test them. And I did; I made a lot of them out of balsa wood. All you need is an alert mind and a new idea; and you go test it, to see if it works.”

He first became interested in windmills in the late 1970s, as a possible means of pumping water and generating electricity in his

home. The configuration that looked best to him is technically known as a panamone. It consists of a vertical shaft driven by vertical blades attached to it, the whole assembly resembling an eggbeater pointing upward.

Testing his concept was a problem. It was impossible to build the kind of full-scale wind tunnel used in the aerospace industry. So, lacking any means of moving large volumes of air through the windmill at a steady, controlled speed, he chose to move the windmill through the air instead. He mounted his first full-scale prototype on a pickup truck whose speedometer had been calibrated by means of a radar gun supplied by friendly local police. The truck was then driven to and fro at various speeds, while the windmill's power output was measured.

Results were encouraging, refinements were made, and, a little over a year ago, the first working model was installed on the roof of a building in Astoria, Oregon.

“It was four feet in diameter and ten feet tall. In a fifty-knot wind, it developed seven-and-a-half horse-power. This present model is more efficient than any other type of windmill I know of.”

“My design is quiet enough to be installed on the roofs of houses in the Northeast and Midwest. This is an application which I think is quite valid. In the winter in that part of the country, the windchill factor is just as important to a house as to an individual. It can double the heating bills. But a windmill could generate direct current to power a simple electric-resistance heating system, so that the harder the wind blew, the more the windmill would heat the house. This would negate the windchill factor.”

While the windmill remains the most impressive end product to emerge from Herbert's amateur-science activities, he has made smaller experiments that demonstrate the feasibility of other energy

sources. Including a solar collector and a methane generator.

“I built a passive solar heater, using seconds of thermo-pane, four feet wide by six-feet-four. They cost me eleven bucks each because each one had a little scratch or something in it. Four inches behind them are banks of beer cans cut in half and stacked like a honeycomb. These panels are tipped in the general direction of the sun. You don't need to make them follow the sun precisely with a tracking system, because it shines into the cans from a wide range of angles. The cans trap the infrared, so they heat up. Their heat is transferred to air that flows over them by convection. It's very effective.”

This system is the one installed in his own home. The methane project, on the other hand, was rigged up temporarily in a shack outside at the back of his house.

“I experimented generating methane from chicken manure in various ways. I wanted to see if it was practical, and it was practical, to a degree. The simplest way was to slit a truck inner tube, insert the manure, then patch the tube. As the manure decomposed, creating the gas, the tube expanded, producing the pressure that you need to use the gas. I was raising chickens then, and we did our own slaughtering. We used the methane for singeing them, to burn off the feathers. So that was like using everything of the pig except the squeal – and, maybe even the squeal as well,” he laughs.

“There was a spigot and a pipe attached where the valve used to be, in the truck tube. This could also be connected to a small stove, which we sometimes used for boiling water. The whole thing was improvised, and it looked – well, it looked pretty weird.”

This kind of primitive farm technology seems reminiscent of communes of the late 1960s, but Herbert doesn't endorse the counter-culture philosophy that suggests we should opt out of

society and become wholly self-sufficient.

“People say to me, ‘You're trying to build an independent establishment in your farm,’ and that's absolutely wrong. The independent, self-sustaining farm is the modern version of building a sailboat and rowing to Tahiti. There's a myth about it. I don't believe in it. You're part of society and you ought to be aware of the necessity for interacting with it.”

However, he does agree with decentralization where it's practical, and in dispersing concentrations of political power.

“I do believe in putting power in the hands of the people. We have never used the jury system to the extent that we could. Now I'm not saying that juries always do right, and always give you justice. But the people who are governed should be able to say, ‘This is the way we will be governed.’”

“For example, I would put an automatic jury review, at the local level, on any school-board expenditure over $100,000. Automatically, you'd have twelve jurors who are called up at random from among the people who voted in the last election. And I’d give them subpoena power, so that they can ask for records, and get them, and then say yes or no to the expenditure.”

“Now, of course, this brings you head-to-head with the educational bureaucracy, which will say – never in these words, but this is really what they’re saying – ‘Surely you don't think some stupid housewife can determine the complexities of these things that we know so much better than they do?’ Well, I think that a housewife can.”

“This would also be an incentive for people to vote. I think they would say, ‘If I vote, I may be called on to serve on one of these juries.’ I think one of the things that keeps people from voting now is that their vote has very little to do with what's going to happen. So,

let’s bring the government back where it belongs, into the hands of the governed.”

Herbert decided in grade school that he wanted to be a writer, and began his career as a newspaper reporter. Subsequently he worked as speech writer for a U.S. senator, which gave him considerably more real-life experience of politics than most science fiction authors, and was a lasting influence on his outlook. He came to the conclusion that large centers of power inevitably attract people who are, he says, “either corrupt or corruptible. I've yet to see a State capital, when I was an investigative reporter, that wasn't a cesspool, and I think the major cesspool in the United States is Washington, D.C. So I think we ought to take power away from these centers, and redistribute it.”

“But politicians are only part of the problem. We also have to deal with arrogance in the power structure of bureaucracy. I have heard a very high-level bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., talk of a United States senator who was causing them some trouble, was a threat to reduce their budget, and so on; and he called the senator a ‘transient’. Think about the arrogance of that. ‘He'll be gone in a year or so, and I’ll still be here.’ And there's a lot of that in the bureaucracy, especially the higher up you go.”

His dislike of bureaucracy makes him deeply suspicious of all large, well-established institutions. And he includes the scientific establishment in that category.

“You get power structures based on bureaucratic demands, rather than on the demands of the research; and the primary demand of bureaucracy is, ‘cover your ass.’ This is unfortunate, since we need to take chances – take advantage of the fact that wild cards sometimes are playable. Give the odd idea some research money, and let 'em see if it works. Don't say, out of hand, ‘Oh, that's crazy,

you must be some kind of a jerk to even think that.'"

"Most of the major breakthroughs in our history have come from individuals or very small group research-and-development efforts. Whereas, what you get in the bureaucratic system are finance-dominated concepts, where people are more interested in maintaining the life of their system than they are in the original goal, or aim, of the system."

As an individualist and experimenter himself, Herbert feels that scientists should be less constrained by budgetary and bureaucratic controls, even when controversial research is involved. He does not believe we should try to restrict experiments with recombinant DNA, for example – even though one of his novels, *The White Plague*, describes a global catastrophe resulting from such research. His outlook is that legislation to prohibit DNA experiments would simply drive them underground, at which point they would become secret and hence even more dangerous. "Laws to control things invariably strengthen the powers that oppose that control," he points out.

He acquired his views on science and scientists in much the same way as he acquired his political outlook: from personal journalistic experience.

"I found I could approach a very respected person In any particular field and say to him, 'Look. I'm a quick study and a good Interviewer, and I'll demonstrate it for you. You must have some papers that you want written; I know a technique for getting them out of you and writing them. In return, I want you to hold individual seminars for me, to give me a quick course in your particular field.'"

"The technique for getting the article would be to sit down with a tape recorder, and say. 'Okay, what is the article about?' Because a lot of the time it's just motivation, and dragging the words out of them. I would start asking more and more questions, pertinent

questions, getting the language of it. And in return, they would pay off. Once they saw that it worked, I might do three or four papers for them. They became very enamored of this technique – most of them did, anyway. And most of them swore me to silence!", he chuckles.

And so, as in the aerodynamic research for his windmill design, Herbert simply went out and found what he needed. From his personal contact with professional scientists, he acquired a surprising breadth of knowledge, as is evident in the *Dune* books, which are densely packed with detail and are authoritative on topics ranging from ecology to biochemistry.

In addition to the *Dune* series he has written more than a dozen other science fiction novels, frequently featuring a lone individual who molds his own destiny and changes the fate of a world or even a colonized multiplicity of worlds. Balancing this libertarian theme, he also demonstrates the dangers of unrestricted personal power, and the folly of slavishly following leaders. He explains: "In *Dune* itself, I created a charismatic leader, a young prince, so that when I inverted it, you would see the dangers of following charismatic leaders, no matter how good they were."

But the legions of diehard *Dune* fans seem to respond more to the power fantasies than the message of moderation, and Herbert finds himself at the center of a cult, even though, in person and in print, he denounces all forms of cultism.

As a result, he has become careful of his privacy. The woods around his home are a necessary barrier between him and his public. Fans of *Dune*, he says, would drive him crazy if they ever found out where he lived. He maintains two unlisted phone numbers, one of them known only to a very few friends and associates, the other monitored by an answering machine that does not mention his name in its outgoing message.

“In the past,” he explains, “I’ve had calls at all times of the day and night, from people wanting to know about *Dune*, and what it all means. I even received a call at two in the morning from Miami, Florida, a bunch of stoned-out fans telling me the significance of *Dune*.”

He seems uncomfortable when asked to talk specifically about the book and his literary influences. He prefers to speak in general terms – for instance, about the novel’s relevance to the role of the individual in society. This outlook, he says, owes little to libertarian authors such as Ayn Rand.

“Ayn Rand is good reading, but pretty simplistic. If I had to name my literary influences, they would be much broader, more catholic. Ezra Pound's *Make it New* really hit me between the eyes, for instance. And then there’s, oh, Shakespeare. Proust, de Maupassant. As regards a system of belief, I’m solidly bedded in Zen.”

His current projects include a new science fiction novel, and possibly a nonfiction project, about which he remains reticent. He has spent considerable time promoting the *Dune* movie, and reports that a sequel is already past the planning stages. Through all of this, however, he has not lost sight of his work as amateur scientist. Indeed, he has considered expanding his role, to become a kind of patron of the sciences, sponsoring his own private laboratory.

“I wanted to start a research Institute, in my little community in the Northwest, where you would have think-tank types to dream things up, and you'd also have craftsmen and machine-tool experts in fully equipped machine shops, so you'd be able to see right away if there was any practical application. I wasn't overly ambitious; I thought, maybe, fifty people, eventually, within four or five years, could be working as a basic crew, and maybe I could finance It. I can't start it right now, because of taxes.”

In the meantime, despite all his reservations about bureaucracy and the political process, he remains fundamentally optimistic about the American system.

“This country still has an independent spirit, a fix-it-yourself mentality. This is an enormous advantage relative to Japan, for example. We have a lot of screwdriver mechanics around our country. Look at the money that's made by Black and Decker. Who are they supplying – industry? No way, they're supplying basement machine shops, and garages. Now, maybe all that those people want to make is model boats. Fine; but if they were given the confidence to try something else, maybe they'd go do it.”

“True, we're not turning out all that many engineers, but engineering is not all that difficult to learn. I believe in never stopping one's education. One of my kids said to me the other day, a thing that really touched me. She said that one of the things I'd taught her was, never to stop learning.”

Clearly, this is a motto that has structured a large part of Frank Herbert's life – and accounts for much of his remarkable success.

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Essays

How To Build A World

Amra v2#34 – taken from a speech at Pacificon II, 1965

This subject was handed to me apparently because of the "Dune" serials in *Analog*. I must confess to some misgivings in tackling it. Better worlds *have* been built, you know. But since I've been called “a sacrilegious bastard” on numerous occasion, I guess I can add *hubris* to my sins.

Here's how Dune was built.

(I want to insert here the warning that this will be a rambling discourse: building a world is a rambling process with alluring side-lines difficult to resist – especially for a person who can't just go to the dictionary to look up a word without spending the next hour or so reading the dictionary.)

First, there was the idea – THE IDEA!

This idea originated almost ten years ago while I was doing a newspaper article. That article took me to Florence, Oregon, a coastal town with dune problems. Because it's the home of a cooperative project by State and Federal authorities seeking control of dunes, Florence has become a mecca for people with similar problems from all over the world. Tell the Florence Chamber of Commerce I mentioned this. It's true: Delegations to study dune control at Florence have come from such places as Israel, Chile, Italy, Spain, Algeria, Turkey, Libya, Iran, India, Saudi Arabia, Mexico – just to name a few.

At Florence, they've solved the dune problem at least to the extent of controlling sand movement – developing grasses to hold them, perfecting techniques such as planting on the windward side to anchor a dune, plantings on the lee side to make them grow taller and form windbreaks.

In doing the newspaper article on this project, I found myself hooked by dunes. Seriously – odd things can catch your imagination. I had a real thing for dunes. I began studying dry-land cultures because that's where most dunes are found. This just another form of reading the *dictionary*.

Slowly the writer in me began to rear up and I saw I *might* have the makings of a story setting here. (This was after about two years.) – Then I began to think perhaps had the makings of an entire world here – a world you might recognize somewhat if you'd ever lived in an arid region. A whole world, I thought – a planet in extremis for lack of water. People brutalized by this necessity. A culture, a civilization squirming out of such a morass.

Now, that's the chief thing most people remark when *Dune* is concerned – the dry planet-ecology. But it was just a means to an end. A planet, in my way of thinking, is a kind of spaceship, a

biosphere hurtling through uninhabitable regions. And the important thing for the story is the ship's occupants.

Let me say in passing – because this (Pacificon II) audience has just been treated to a discussion of Sword and Sorcery – that *Dune* is a Sword-and-Sorcery story. For purposes of story treatment, psi is an exact equivalent to sorcery – and you who've read this story know *Dune's* emphasis on cutting instruments.

The people, then: How does this world inflict itself on its people?

For this kind of world-building project there has to be a take-off point, something, you as a reader can identify. As I've hinted, that take-off point for *Dune* is these dry-land cultures known to us here on Earth. For *Dune*, though, the dryness is amplified. That's not as simple as it might sound. If you stretch your imagination to the point where you can consider Earth as a living creature, it isn't a much greater stretch to think of the human population as Earth's disease. For much of Earth, humans act counter to a healthy, self-perpetuating ecology.

There is one region, though, where this virus-homo has modified his virulence and is less of a blight on the biosphere. That's in the dry regions. (Some of you may have noted that up to this point I've not used the word "desert". In the English language, "desert" has such extreme, one-value implications, while dryness is a relative matter, even in the desert. Dune is dry. Some deserts, by comparison, are wet.) In Earths's desert regions, virus-homo uses extra care to nurture a full spectrum of those growing things – plant, animal, insect – which makes human life possible. Husbandry here still has some of its ancient religious implications: marriage to the earth and the need to make the earth fertile. Here, we find an ancient tradition still active – of improving the land, go getting into the natural rhythm of things, of maintaining man as viable part of the surrounding

ecology. In these arid regions this has not always been the case, nor is it everywhere the case today. But it *is* here you find this phenomenon most dramatically displayed as part of folk cultures, accepted usage – “the way things are done.” Resistance to change, conservatism, you know, isn’t always a non-survival characteristics. The tradition and culture of these desert people can look back on lessons of many mistakes and see the evidence of those mistakes around them even today.

For example, nomadic tribes with desert background began the destruction of the cedars of Lebanon. As a result, topsoil over a once fertile region is scant and thin. The land is less fertile, produces less food than it did in Biblical times – although the region’s rainfall is not sufficiently different to account for the change. Destruction of watersheds of vast regions of China had a direct bearing on China’s legendary poverty. (It wasn't the completely controlling factor, of course; I’m not talking about total cause and effect, only tracing parts of immediate chains – a chancy procedure when discussing the land that originated Tao.)

Intimate association with the earth that sustains them, then, is a characteristic of these arid regions. In a sense, this is a characteristic of all the less fortunate areas of the Earth – but let's not confuse exploitation with intimate use. Italian rice farmers exploit their land. Some Japanese rice farmers exploit their land. Wheat farmers of the American American plains exploit their land. All of these people have a thing in common: they make little effort to fit their activities into any sustaining cycle of the countryside. More and more Japanese rice farmers are turning to chemical fertilizers. The Italians are far down that road. American wheat farmers paid once with a dust bowl. They have problems of exhausted soil in some regions of Washington and South Dakota right now. Chemical fertilizers are filling some of the gaps – but more and more gaps are appearing. “Put and take” are not balancing out in these regions.

Let's contrast this with some other rice culture regions now: South China, Korea, southwestern Japan, India, Turkey, Sicily. (I'm making this rice-wheat comparison because both use large chunks of real estate and involve seeds of grass-type plants.)

First, these regions use animal and human excrement for fertilizer – a much maligned procedure because it quite definitely is a source of disease. Second, some are blessed with soil replenishment by floods. In both cases, the people live close to their dirt. It sustains them and they sustain it. These are wet climates, though: How about the deserts of Dune?

Well, both are cases of living intimately, with the planet – and, most vital: in extremis the primitive does a better job of surviving. What is it about these primitives that helps them survive?

Most people in our country tend to think of inhabitants in rice culture regions as existing on a simple diet. Not true. The more primitive of these regions actually enjoy a wide variety of foods – but they eat things we don't normally consider food: wild and semi-domesticated plants, insects; they also eat all of the fish. They get their B vitamins from beer and their calcium from lime. They cook some foods a minimal time to conserve both fuel and food value. Other foods they've learned to cook long enough to make them digestible.

Example: During the Korean war, large numbers of Unites Nations troops died in North Korean and Chinese prison camps. There was one dramatic exception: the Turks.

First, their religion told them and they believed (and and could not be shaken from that belief) that they were better men than their captors.

Second, they recognized food when they saw it – in green leaves,

grubs under logs, the soft inner bark of trees.

Third, they knew the rough rice their captors gave them had to be a long time to make it digestible and they waited out that time patiently.

Fourth, they stuck together as a tribe and helped each other.

Fifth, when they found their food, they didn't destroy the source. They took only part of the grubs, they didn't ring the trees, left the green plant to create more greenery.

They were a primitive people with a long peasant tradition of pampering the earth, of fitting themselves into the earth's own cycle rather than upsetting the rhythms.

This is something you'll recognize as having been adapted to *Dune*. This [is] a fact of Dune.

Ecologists are just beginning to recognize what most primitives know by instinct: The more kinds of life there are within the ecological domain, the more chemical energy there is bound up in living matter; where life teems and proliferates in intimate association – precisely here you find life most dependent on life's variety.

The energy interchange of life is most complicated. It's interdependent in ways we understand only dimly. Increasingly apparent is the fact that we still don't know the extent of our interdependence – one life form upon another. For this reason, I dealt only in generalities for some of this living interdependence on Dune. What details of the intertwining are known, those are larded through the story. Where precise facts are unknown, I skirted them rather than invent. Introducing unknowns in this area distracts from the few unknowns central to the story conflict.

But since a world does inflict itself upon its habitants, I had to solve for some these unknowns. Thus you find birds of all kinds on Dune converted to blood drinkers, bats dependent upon human salvia for part of their moisture, dew precipitators (a logical and practical device that some manufacturer of chromoplastics such as DuPont should take up) – and Dune gives you the pure intervention: the worm-spice-Little Maker cycle, a deliberate parody on the others forms of interdependence.

Are you beginning to see how a world is built?

The dominating factor of Dune is its lack of water. Moisture, not water, becomes a matter of constant concern. Plants must preserve moisture by exaggerations of the ways they do it on Earth deserts.

Humans must do the same.

You can come right out and state these survival methods – and in some cases I do: giving details of stillsuits and other desert clothing, pointing up reclamation of the body's water. A more powerful device though, is to make these facts appear as part of the general culture. For this you go to the language because language is the map of culture. The language of Dune is filled with clues to the planet’s severity, some invented for the occasion, some borrowed from the languages of Earth's primitive desert cultures.

“Speed is a device of Satan.” – Arabic

“The sun is your enemy, the moon your friend.” – Frank Herbert

Take note of Dune's many words for knife, the use of landscape features as calendar markers (Navajo), the many words for ways to with poison, the refined uses of assassination. Without being told it specifically, you know these are important matters in the culture. Note the general austerity of life during the nomadic migrations on Dune contrasted with the richness of their surroundings in semi-permanent camps, the artistic treatment of everyday tools. These are civilization surfacing.

Special words for items necessary to life betray the background of the culture. Note the many ways in Dune that words for water are coupled to other words implying use or function.

Language is the map of the culture. Arabic, for example, has some sixty words for camel or camels. This one fact alone

tells you the importance of camels to an Arab’s survival. (No doubt the Arabs are similarly impressed with the number of words *we* use for all various kinds – tracked, wheeled, armored, racing, or whatnot – of camel-less carriages.)

This is not a mere surface phenomenon. We only know a world through our human reactions to it. We record these reactions in our languages – and sometimes we bury our reactions, our judgements, in our definitions. The language moves on and the original judgements are mostly forgotten. Those judgements still exist, though. They map our world as it has inflicted itself upon us.

These many hidden assumptions in common words trace out our

cultural history, our wanderings, and our wonderings. Here are a few examples for your amusement:

•ATONE – to become at-one with oneself – from OFr.

•BARGAIN – from LL for boat and to haggle, both referring to important goods. Note the implication that something brought by boat was cheaper and subject to greater depression in price.

•SMUGGLE – we get this one from Gr and Anglo-Saxon out of words meaning to creep under cover of smoke.

•DELIGHT – its root words mean enjoyable to the tongue.

•PRECARIOUS – from L: full of prayer.

•MARTYR – from Gr word for for witness. Martyr carries and old custom in its definition – trial by ordeal. If you died you were innocent: “a witness of the gods”; but if you lived you obviously had the Devil’s help and were immediately slain.

•VILLAIN – a social judgement: a dweller on a farm, a rustic, a hayseed, was originally a villein.

•AUTHENTIC – from Gr meaning one who acts for himself, thus does the job well. “If you want a job done well, do it yourself.” Curiously, the early English meaning carried the idea of

demanding obedience: “Do it the way I tell you to do it.”

•CHAGRIN – literally, you get Turkish gooseflesh: *shagreen.* The rough leather from the rump of a horse.

•ZANY – the idiot protected by the gods, a frequent idea among primitives, from the Hebrew for “theLord shows mercy on such a one.”

•CHALLENGE – rooted in Latin for false accusation and in its original English sense carried the definite idea of calling a person out purely for cutting him down in a duel.

•(PROVE – the older meaning “test or try the validity or worth of” has gradually been replaced by “establish validity or worth of”. The old saying “The exception proves the rule” made more sense with the older meaning.)

Reading the dictionary is fun, isn't it?

Okay, these are some of the places you dig up the knowledge on how to build a world. There are others.

First, you have your own experiences of living. I've told you about Florence and the fact article by which earned my bread and beans. There's also the fact that I've lived in the Sonora desert of Mexico – and I could talk to you all night about that.

Beyond this, there's the fact that I've read more than 200 books, pamphlets, reports, and special papers on dry land ecology, desert societies, and animal and human adaptations to deserts of all kinds ranging from the Gobi through the Sonora, the Sahara, and the Kalahari. You'd be surprised at the extensive specialized material on these subjects no farther away than your library. It ranges from how far a soldier in the desert can march in one day on how much water, to how to control poisonous reptiles. You get hundreds of curious sidelights such as the fact that threats to survival increase the viability of pine seeds. Pine trees whose seeds normally are viable only once in every nine years will sprout every year when the trees are threatened by invasion of dunes.

Humans show the same characteristic. Sexual instinct increases under stress, even under the stress of starvation, a fact that carries most terrible implications when you combine it with the pressures of population on food sources.

You were warned this would be a rambling discourse. It rambled the way research for Dune rambled. By this device, I hoped to give you some feeling of the slow growth of the idea into a full-fledged story. It's like a ship gathering barnacles, collecting thousands of details. Many of those details contribute to the story without ever appearing in it. They're like the cultural traces you find in languages. They contribute to the way the characters behave. The details are present as roots if not as foliage. In one sense, such details are like genes: they help shape the finished product from inside.

The finished product, of course, is the story and the world.

During this talk, I've been doing something – sometimes consciously – that I once did purely unconsciously: referring to *Dune* only as a story. Not a novel, but a story. A friend who'd noted this characteristic of my conversation once brought me up short by

calling my attention to it.

“Why do you always say you're working on a story and never on a novel?” he asked.

It took me digging in my own roots and I had to admit finally that I had an unconscious assumption: If I don't tell a good story, even if I create a world, there's nothing novel about it.

Dune Genesis

by Frank Herbert, PUBLISHED IN THE July 1980 issue of Omni Magazine

Dune began with a concept whose mostly unfleshed images took shape across about six years of research and one and a half years of writing. The story was all in my head until it appeared on paper as I typed it out.

How did it evolve? I conceived of a long novel, the whole trilogy as one book about the messianic convulsions that periodically overtake us. Demagogues, fanatics, con-game artists, the innocent and the not-so-innocent bystanders – all were to have a part in the drama. This grows from my theory that superheroes are disastrous for humankind. Even if we find a real hero (whatever-or whoever that may be), eventually fallible mortals take over the power structure that always comes into being around such a leader.

Personal observation has convinced me that in the power area of politics/economics and in their logical consequence, war, people tend to give over every decision-making capacity to any leader who can wrap himself in the myth fabric of the society. Hitler did it. Churchill did it. Franklin Roosevelt did it. Stalin did it. Mussolini did it.

My favorite examples are John F. Kennedy and George Patton. Both fitted themselves into the flamboyant Camelot pattern, consciously assuming bigger-than-life appearance. But the most casual observation reveals that neither was bigger than life. Each had our common human ailment – clay feet.

This, then, was one of my themes for *Dune*: Don't give over all of

your critical faculties to people in power, no matter how admirable those people may appear to be. Beneath the hero's facade you will find a human being who makes human mistakes. Enormous problems arise when human mistakes are made on the grand scale available to a superhero. And sometimes you run into another problem.

It is demonstrable that power structures tend to attract people who want power for the sake of power and that a significant proportion of such people are imbalanced-in a word, insane.

That was the beginning. Heroes are painful, superheroes are a catastrophe. The mistakes of superheroes involve too many of us in disaster.

It is the systems themselves that I see as dangerous. Systematic is a deadly word. Systems originate with human creators, with people who employ them. Systems take over and grind on and on. They are like a flood tide that picks up everything in its path. How do they originate?

All of this encapsulates the stuff of high drama, of entertainment – and I'm in the entertainment business first. It's all right to include a pot of message, but that's not the key ingredient of wide readership. Yes, there are analogs in *Dune* of today's events – corruption and bribery in the highest places, whole police forces lost to organized crime, regulatory agencies taken over by the people they are supposed to regulate. The scarce water of *Dune* is an exact analog of oil scarcity. CHOAM is OPEC.

But that was only the beginning.

While this concept was still fresh in my mind, I went to Florence, Oregon, to write a magazine article about a US Department of Agriculture project there. The USDA was seeking ways to control

coastal (and other) sand dunes. I had already written several pieces about ecological matters, but my superhero concept filled me with a concern that ecology might be the next banner for demagogues and would-be-heroes, for the power seekers and others ready to find an adrenaline high in the launching of a new crusade.

Our society, after all, operates on guilt, which often serves only to obscure its real workings and to prevent obvious solutions. An adrenaline high can be just as addictive as any other kind of high.

Ecology encompasses a real concern, however, and the Florence project fed my interest in how we inflict ourselves upon our planet. I could begin to see the shape of a global problem, no part of it separated from any other – social ecology, political ecology, economic ecology. It's an open-ended list.

Even after all of the research and writing, I find fresh nuances in religions, psychoanalytic theories, linguistics, economics, philosophy, plant research, soil chemistry, and the metalanguages of pheromones. A new field of study rises out of this like a spirit rising from a witch's cauldron: the psychology of planetary societies.

Out of all this came a profound reevaluation of my original concepts. In the beginning I was just as ready as anyone to fall into step, to seek out the guilty and to punish the sinners, even to become a leader. Nothing, I felt, would give me more gratification than riding the steed of yellow journalism into crusade, doing the book that would right the old wrongs.

Reevaluation raised haunting questions. I now believe that evolution, or devolution, never ends short of death, that no society has ever achieved an absolute pinnacle, that all humans are not created equal. In fact, I believe attempts to create some abstract equalization create a morass of injustices that rebound on the equalizers. Equal justice and equal opportunity are ideals we should

seek, but we should recognize that humans administer the ideals and that humans do not have equal ability.

Reevaluation taught me caution. I approached the problem with trepidation. Certainly, by the loosest of our standards there were plenty of visible targets, a plethora of blind fanaticism and guilty opportunism at which to aim painful barbs.

But how did we get this way? What makes a Nixon? What part do the meek play in creating the powerful? If a leader cannot admit mistakes, these mistakes will be hidden. Who says our leaders must be perfect? Where do they learn this?

Enter the fugue. In music, the fugue is usually based on a single theme that is played many different ways. Sometimes there are free voices that do fanciful dances around the interplay. There can be secondary themes and contrasts in harmony, rhythm, and melody. From the moment when a single voice introduces the primary theme, however, the whole is woven into a single fabric.

What were my instruments in this ecological fugue? Images, conflicts, things that turn upon themselves and become something quite different, myth figures and strange creatures from the depths of our common heritage, products of our technological evolution, our human desires, and our human fears.

You can imagine my surprise to learn that John Schoenherr, one of the world's most foremost wildlife artists and illustrators, had been living in my head with the same images. People find it difficult to believe that John and I had no consultations prior to his painting of the Dune illustrations. I assure you that the paintings were a wonderful surprise to me.

The Sardaukar appear like the weathered stones of *Dune*. The Baron's paunch could absorb a world. The ornithopters are insects

preying on the land. The sandworms are Earth shipworms grown monstrous. Stilgar glares out at us with the menace of a warlock.

What especially pleases me is to see the interwoven themes, the fuguelike relationships of images that exactly replay the way *Dune* took shape.

As in an Escher lithograph, I involved myself with recurrent themes that turn into paradox. The central paradox concerns the human vision of time. What about Paul's gift of prescience – the Presbyterian fixation? For the Delphic Oracle to perform, it must tangle itself in a web of predestination. Yet predestination negates surprises and, in fact, sets up a mathematically enclosed universe whose limits are always inconsistent, always encountering the unprovable. It's like a koan, a Zen mind breaker. It's like the Cretan Epimenides saying, “All Cretans are liars.”

Each limiting descriptive step you take drives your vision outward into a larger universe which is contained in still a larger universe ad infinitum, and in the smaller universes ad infinitum. No matter how finely you subdivide time and space, each tiny division contains infinity.

But this could imply that you can cut across linear time, open it like a ripe fruit, and see consequential connections. You could be prescient, predict accurately. Predestination and paradox once more.

The flaw must lie in our methods of description, in languages, in social networks of meaning, in moral structures, and in philosophies and religions-all of which convey implicit limits where no limits exist. Paul Muad'Dib, after all, says this time after time throughout *Dune*.

Do you want an absolute prediction? Then you want only today, and you reject tomorrow. You are the ultimate conservative. You are

trying to hold back movement in an infinitely changing universe. The verb to be does make idiots of us all.

Of course there are other themes and fugal interplays in *Dune* and throughout the trilogy. *Dune Messiah* performs a classic inversion of the theme. *Children of Dune* expands the number of themes interplaying. I refuse, however, to provide further answers to this complex mixture. That fits the pattern of the fugue. You find your own solutions. Don't look to me as your leader.

Caution is indeed indicated, but not the terror that prevents all movement. Hang loose. And when someone asks whether you're starting a new cult, do what I do: Run like hell.

Source: www.frankherbert.org/news/genesis.html

While I was writing Dune

by FRANK HERBERT, FOREWORD TO Heretics OF DUNE, 1982

…there was no room in my mind for concerns about the book's success or failure. I was concerned only with the writing. Six years of research had preceded the day I sat down to put the story together, and the interweaving of the many plot layers I had planned required a degree of concentration I had never before experienced.

It was to be a story exploring the myth of the Messiah.

It was to produce another view of a human-occupied planet as an energy machine.

It was to penetrate the interlocked workings of politics and economics.

It was to be an examination of absolute prediction and its pitfalls.

It was to have an awareness drug in it and tell what could happen through dependence on such a substance.

Potable water was to be an analog for oil and for water itself, a substance whose supply diminishes each day.

It was to be an ecological novel, then, with many overtones, as well as a story about people and their human concerns with human values, and I had to monitor each of these levels at every stage in

the book. There wasn't room in my head to think about much else.

Following the first publication, reports from the publishers were slow and, as it turned out, inaccurate. The critics had panned it. More than twelve publishers had turned it down before publication. There was no advertising.

Something was happening out there, though.

For two years, I was swamped with bookstore and reader complaints that they could not get the book. *The Whole Earth Catalog* praised it. I kept getting these telephone calls from people asking me if I were starting a cult. The answer: "God no!"

What I'm describing is the slow realization of success. By the time the first three *Dune* books were completed, there was little doubt that this was a popular work – one of the most popular in history, I am told, with some ten million copies sold worldwide. Now the most common question people ask is: "What does this success mean to you?"

It surprises me. I didn't expect failure either. It was a work and I did it.

Parts of *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune* were written before *Dune* was completed. They fleshed out more in the writing, but the essential story remained intact. I was a writer and I was writing. The success meant I could spend more time writing. Looking back on it, I realize I did the right thing instinctively. You don't write for success. That takes part of your attention away from the writing. If you're really doing it, that's all you're doing: writing.

There's an unwritten compact between you and the reader. If someone enters a bookstore and sets down hard earned money (energy) for your book, you owe that person some entertainment

and as much more as you can give. That was really my intention all along.

Frank Herbert

April 1982

Source: https://libraryguides.fullerton.edu/ld.php?content_id=16210456

Introduction to The Collected Stories of Frank Herbert

I have tried to teach writing, only to discover that you cannot teach writing. You can teach the plumbing—which pipe connects to which elbow. The actual writing is something you must teach yourself. You learn by doing. The knowledge comes from the inside and it leans most heavily on the oral tradition of language, much to the despair of those who would like it all orderly and neat with explicit rules to follow.

It comes as a shock to many in our print-oriented civilization to be told that language, the basic tool of the writer, is more oral than written. Contemplate those thousands of years of oral tradition before we ever ventured to carve symbols in clay and stone. We are most profoundly conditioned to language-as-speech. The written word is a latecomer.

Before you will believe the reality of a story, someone must stand up on that printed page and speak. His words must have the characteristics of speech. They must reach your ears through your eyes. Under the onslaught of non-print media (TV, film, radio, cassette players…) this is becoming ever more necessary. The oral tradition has never really been subjugated.

True to that tradition, I find I must have a sense of joy in what I do. There has to be some fun in it which you can feel even in the darkest moments of the story. This is the entertainment business. I'm the jongleur visiting your castle. I bring songs and news from

other castles I have visited, and some of those are strange indeed. I sing for my supper and those other castles of which I sing are only partly figments of imagination. We may share a consensus reality which demands our service, but if you write science fiction you crowd the edges of that reality.

When we say “science”, we usually mean technology. Science fiction is deeply involved with technology and the questioning of the human future. To write science fiction, you make a connection between technology and the myth-dream of human immortality. We inevitably deal with the alienation of man brought on by his immersion in a welter of things which he is told he wants/needs, but which always seem to remove him from an essential contact with his own life.

This is not really a recent development.

The company of science fiction writers is a venerable troop. We go back somewhere beyond Lucian of Samosata in the 2nd Century AD. We number in our company such lights as Plato, Cyrano de Bergerac, Thomas More (who gave us the word Utopia), Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, Edgar Allen Poe, Aldous Huxley and George Orwell—which represents only the barest listing.

We are, as a rule, concerned with mankind living on other planets. (Lucian sent his hero to the moon on a waterspout.) Often, our concern is touched by the realization that no animal species can survive forever on one planet. Even as we most freely express our fears that the human, species is in danger of extinction, we parade our differences from other animals via our stories. We have imagination and, occasionally, touches of reason. Much of science fiction says these may be our ultimate strength in facing that chaotic unknown which constantly threatens to reduce us to zero.

Freud once said: “When you try to conceal your innermost thoughts,

every pore oozes betrayal.”

When you write, the printed page absorbs all of that ooze—all of you, the wise and the silly, the profound, the shallow and the in-between. It all hangs out in these talking letters. I want to write for as large an audience as possible, all of you sitting around the castle fireplace after a four-star dinner, all of you raptly enjoying the sound of my lute. There’s no sense trying to hide that; it’s in everything I do. And always there’s the upcoming story in which I hope to do it all better. The current work, about which I will not talk because that wastes the energies which should go into the creation, remains my favorite. I will pour as much of myself into it as I am able, holding back nothing. You cannot lose by this. You destroy nothing. You are creating the egg, not the goose.

Source: https://www.torforgeblog.com/2016/11/07/introduction-to-the-collected-stories-of-frank-herbert/

Afterword to *Chapterhouse: Dune*

Here is another book dedicated to Bev, friend, wife, dependable helper and the person who gave this one its title. The dedication is posthumous and the words below, written the morning after she died, should tell you something of her inspiration.

One of the best things I can say about Bev is there was nothing in our life together I need forget, not even the graceful moment of her death. She gave me then the ultimate gift of her love, a peaceful passing she had spoken of without fear or tears, allaying thereby my own fears. What greater gift is there than to demonstrate you need not fear death?

The formal obituary would read: Beverly Ann Stuart Forbes Herbert, born October 20, 1926, Seattle Washington; died 5:05 p.m. February 7, 1984, at Kawaloa, Maui. I know that is as much formality as she would tolerate. She made me promise there would be no conventional funeral “with a preacher's sermon and my body on display”. As she said: “I will not be in that body then but it deserves more dignity than such a display provides.”

She insisted I go no further than to have her cremated and scatter her ashes at her beloved Kawaloa “where I have felt so much peace and love”. The only ceremony – friends and loved ones to watch the scattering of her ashes during the singing of “Bridge Over Troubled Water”.

She knew there would be tears then as there are tears while I write these words but in her last days she often spoke of tears as futile.

She recognized tears as part of our animal origins. The dog howls at the loss of its master.

Another part of human awareness dominated her life: Spirit. Not in any mawkish religious sense nor in anything most Spiritualists would associate with the word. To Bev, it was the light shining from living awareness on to everything she encountered. Because of this, I can say despite my grief and even within grief that joy fills my spirit because of the love she gave and continues to give me. Nothing in the sadness at her death is too high a price to pay for the love we shared.

Her choice of a song to sing at the scattering of her ashes went to what we often said to each other – that she was my bridge and I was hers. That epitomizes our married life.

We began that sharing with a ceremony before a minister in Seattle on June 20, 1946. Our honeymoon was spent on a fire-watch lookout atop Kelley Butte in Snoqualmie National Forest. Our quarters were twelve feet square with a cupola above six feet square and most of that filled by the firefinder with which we located any smoke we saw.

In cramped quarters with a spring-powered Victoria and two portable typewriters taking up considerable space on the one table, we pretty well set the pattern of our life together: work to support music, writing and the other joys living provides.

None of this is to say we experienced constant euphoria. Far from it. We had moments of boredom, fears and pains. But there was always time for laughter. Even at the end. Bev still could smile to tell me I had positioned her correctly on her pillows, that I had eased the aching of her back with a gentle massage and the other things necessary because she no longer could do them for herself.

In her final days, she did not want anyone but me to touch her. But our married life had created such a bond of love and trust she often said the things I did for her were as though she did them. Though I had to provide the most intimate care, the care you would give an infant, she did not feel offended nor that her dignity had been assaulted. When I picked her up in my arms to make her more comfortable or bathe her, Bev's arms always went around my shoulders and her face nestled as it often had in the hollow of my neck.

It is difficult to convey the joy of those moments but I assure you it was there. Joy of the spirit. Joy of life even at death. Her hand was in mine when she died and the attending doctor, tears in his eyes., said the thing I and many others had said of her.

“She had grace.”

Many of those who saw that grace did not understand. I remember when we entered the hospital in the pre-dawn hours for the birth of our first son. We were laughing. Attendants looked at us with disapproval. Birth is painful and dangerous. Women die giving birth. Why are these people laughing?

We are laughing because the prospect of new life that was part of both of us filled us with such happiness. We were laughing because the birth was about to occur in a hospital on the site of the hospital where Bev was born. What a marvelous continuity!

Our laughter was infectious and soon others we met on the way to the delivery room were smiling. Disapproval became approval. Laughter was her grace note in moments of stress.

Hers was also the laughter of the constantly new. Everything she encountered had something new in it to excite her senses. There was an ongoing naivety about Bev that was, in its own way, a form

of sophistication. She wanted to find what was good in everything and everyone. As a result, she brought out that response in others.

“Revenge is for children,” she said. “Only people who are basically immature want it.”

She was known to call people who had offended her and plead with them to put away destructive feelings. “Let us be friends.” The source of none of the condolences that poured in after her death surprised me.

It was typical of her that she wanted me to call the radiologist whose treatment in 1974 was the proximate cause of her death and thank him “for giving me these ten beautiful years. Make sure he understands I know he did his best for me when I was dying of cancer. He took the state of the art to its limits and I want him to know my appreciation.”

Is it any wonder that I look back on our years together with a happiness transcending anything words can describe? Is it any wonder I do not want or need to forget one moment of it? Most others merely touched her life at the periphery. I shared it in the most intimate ways and everything she did strengthened me. It would not have been possible for me to do what necessity demanded of me during the final ten years of her life, strengthening her in return, had she not given of herself in the preceding years, holding back nothing. I consider that to be my great good fortune and most miraculous privilege.

Frank Herbert,

Port Townsend, WA

April 6, 1984

The Single Most Important Piece of Advice

L. Ron Hubbard, Writers of the Future (Volume 2), 1986

About the Author

Frank Herbert was born in 1920 and died of a lingering illness in early 1986. He was a reporter and editor on a number of newspapers before becoming a full-time writer.

Although he had been publishing short fiction in various SF magazines since 1952, he became an "over-night" success in 1956 with his first novel, which was serialized in John Campbell's Astounding Science Fiction magazine as Under Pressure*. (In book form, it's known either as* Twenty-First Century Sub *or* The Dragon in the Sea*.)*

His career took a major turn with the 1963 ASF publication of the first Dune *story. After that, of course, Herbert and the* Dune *stories have become world famous. It can be fairly said that Herbert was the last of the ASF "Golden Age" writers. Although those fabulous days had drawn to a close, the sweep and grandeur of Herbert's Work during the last years of Campbell's editorship compellingly recall the very best of the ASF spirit.*

In bringing classical science fiction to worldwide prominence, Herbert ranks among this field's major contributors. An uncompromising stickler for the kind of storytelling principles that are a vigorous SF tradition, Herbert was both popular and respected.

Here is, to our knowledge, the last essay Frank Herbert ever wrote. He gave it to us while in pain, but with the clear purpose of fulfilling what he saw as a paramount obligation to his art and craft.

Proud of his contributions to the Writers of the Future project, as a judge, we had asked him for the single most important piece of advice he would give a beginning writer. Here it is:

The single most important piece of advice I ever got was to concentrate on story. What is "story"? It's the quality that keeps the reader following the narrative. A good story makes interesting things happen to a character with whom the reader can identify. And it keeps them happening, so that the character progresses and grows in stature.

A writer's job is to do whatever is necessary to make the reader want to read the next line. That's what you're supposed to be thinking about when you're writing a story. Don't think about money, don't think about success; concentrate on the story – don't waste your energy on any-thing else. That all takes care of itself, if you've done your job as a writer. If you haven't done that, nothing helps.

I first heard this from literary agent Lurton Blassingame, a highly respected expert on successful story-tellers and storytelling. He's a man who's been watching writers' careers and building writers' careers for decades. And I have heard essentially the same thing from many other successful figures in writing; some of the top writers in the world have said it. It is the best advice j can give to beginners.

I'd also like to say something about older hands helping newcomers. Like many other established writers, I t each students on frequent occasions and lecture to many, other audiences anxious for advice

on writing. I’m very happy to be able to lend my help to the Writers of the Future program. From time to time, though, people have come up to me and asked why I want to "create com-petition" by helping newcomers.

Talking about "competition" in that way is nonsense! The more good writers there are, the more good readers there will be. We'll all benefit – writers and readers alike! So the other piece of advice I have for newcomers is: "Remember how you learned, and when your turn comes, teach."

Listening to the Left Hand

By Frank Herbert. PUBLISHED by Harper's Magazine. 1973.

When I was young and my world was dominated by indestructible adults, I learned an ancient way of thinking that is as dangerous as a rotten board in a stepladder. It told me that the only valuable things were those that I could hold unchanged: the love of a wise grandfather, the enticing mystery of the trail through our woodlot into the forest, the feeling of lake water on a hot summer day, the colors (ahh, those colors) when I opened my new pencil box on the first day of school…

But the grandfather died, a developer bulldozed the woodlot, loggers clear-cut the forest, the lake is polluted and posted against swimming, smog has deadened my ability to detect subtle odors, and pencil boxes aren't what they used to be.

Neither am I.

There may be a quiet spot in my mind where nothing moves and the places of my childhood remain unchanged, but everything else moves and changes. There's dangerous temptation in the nostalgic dream, in the expertise of yesteryear. The nameless animal that is all of us cannot live in places that no longer exist. I want to address myself to the survival of that nameless animal, looking back without

regrets at even the best of what was and will never be again. We should salvage what we can, but even salvaging changes things.

The way of this change is called “process” and it requires that we be prepared to encounter a multiform reality. Line up three bowls in front of you. Put ice water in the one on the left, hot water in the one on the right, and lukewarm water in the middle one. Soak your left hand in the ice water and right hand in the hot water for about a minute, then plunge both hands into the bowl of lukewarm water. Your left hand will tell you the water of the middle bowl is warm, your right hand will report cold. A small experiment in relativity.

We live in a universe dominated by relativity and change, but our intellects keep demanding fixed absolutes. We make our most strident demands for absolutes that contain comforting reassurance. We will misread and/or misunderstand almost anything that challenges our favorite illusions.

It has been noted repeatedly that science students (presumably selected for open-mindedness) encounter a basic difficulty when learning to read X-ray plates. Almost universally, they demonstrate an inability to distinguish between what is shown on the plate and what they believe will be shown. They see things that are not there. The reaction can be linked directly to the preset with which they approach the viewing of a plate. When confronted with proof of the extent to which preconceptions influenced their judgment, they tend to react with surprise, anger, and rejection.

We are disposed to perceive things as they appear, filtering the appearance through our preconceptions and fitting it into the past forms (including all the outright mistakes, illusions, and myths of past forms). If we allow only the right hand's message to get through, then “cold” is the absolute reality to which we cling. When our local reality has attached to it that other message: “This is the way out,” then we're dealing with a form of “holy truth.” Cold becomes a way of life.

FALSE LIMITS

We must begin to see ourselves without the old illusions, whatever their character may be. The apparently sound step can drop us from the ladder when we least expect it. Herman Kahn's opus on the year 2000 never mentioned environmental concerns. A Presidential committee appointed in 1933 by Franklin D. Roosevelt to “plot our course” through 1952 had not a word about atomic energy, antibiotics, jet propulsion, or transistors. Such levels of perception are worse than inadequate; they impose deadly false limits. They beguile us with a promise that “we know what we're doing.”

The man with broken bones stretched out beneath his ladder doesn't need to look at the rotten step to know what he did wrong. He believed a system that had always worked before would work once more. He had never learned to question the mechanisms and limits imposed by his perceptions.

In questioning those mechanisms and limits on a larger scale we move into the arena dominated by the powerful impositions of genetic heritage and individual experience, the unique influenced by the unique. Here is the conglomerate of behavior-biology, the two so entangled they cannot be separated if we hope to understand their interlocked system. Here is “process.”

You and I, while we strive for a one-system view of this process, are at the same time influenced by it and influence it. We peer myopically at it through the screens of “consensus reality,” which is a summation of the most popular beliefs of our time. Out of habit/ illusion/conservatism, we grapple for something that changes as we touch it.

Must we stop the river's motion to understand riverness? Can you understand riverness if you are a particle in its currents? Try this:

Think of our human world as a single organism. This organism has characteristics of a person: internal reaction systems, personality (admittedly fragmented), fixed conceptualizations, regular communication lines (analogue nerves), guidance systems, and other apparatus unique to an individual. You and I are no more than cells of that organism, solitary cells that often act in disturbing concert for reasons not readily apparent.

Against such a background, much of the total species-organism's

behavior may be better understood if we postulate collective aberrations of human consciousness. If the human species can be represented as one organism, maybe we would understand ourselves better if we recognized that the species-organism (all of us) can be neurotic or even psychotic.

It's not that all of us are mad (one plus one plus one, etc.) but that all-of-us-together can be mad. We may even operate out of something like a species ego. We tend to react together with a remarkable degree of similarity across boundaries that are real only to individual cells, but remain transparent to the species. We tend to go psychotic together.

Touch one part and all respond.

The totality can learn.

This implies a nonverbal chemistry of species-wide communication whose workings remain largely unknown. It implies that much of our collective behavior may be preplanned for us in the form of mechanisms that override consciousness. Remember that we're looking for patterns. The wild sexuality of combat troops has been remarked by observers throughout recorded history and has usually been passed off as a kind of boys-will-be-boys variation on the male mystique. Not until this century have we begun to question that item of consensus reality (read *The Sexual Cycle of Human Warfare* by N.I.M. Walter). One of the themes of my own science fiction novel,

Dune, is war as a collective orgasm. The idea is coming under discussion in erudite journals such as *The General Systems Yearbook*.

Assume this concept then. In it, the giant species-organism is perpetually involved with a moving surface of many influences where every generative encounter is felt as a change throughout the system. Some of the cells (we individuals) feel the changes with the brutal impact of a napalm explosion. To others, the transition from one condition to another comes at such a snail crawl that it's barely noticed. But always the species, involved with its longer and larger career, responds to the changes at whatever pace conditions permit.

THE SPECIES-ORGANISM

Understanding that pace and its conditions requires a different approach to the total human system, that nameless animal of a species-organism. In this approach you no longer can listen only to the right hand that tells you “this is the cold way it has always been.” You listen as well to the left hand saying “warm-warm-warm.” Somewhere in between left and right you begin to get a glimmering view of things in process now. That glimmering offers the following observations:

- Something like pheromones (external hormones) interacting between members of the human species to weld groups into collective-action organs. (How does a mob unite and hold itself

together?)

•Isolation cues that separate groups into identifiable substructures, a system possibly influenced by diet. (Aside from accent and mannerisms, how do members of the British upper class recognize each other?)

•Conflict igniters, possibly sophisticated abstractions of primitive postures and vocal signals. (How do you know that the man coming toward you is angry?)

•Glandular responses to changes in territorial circumstances, responses of remarkable similarity throughout large populations, but with a more complex substitution system than implied by most observers. (Why did most of the occupants of Chicago's high-rise Lake Shore ghetto abandon it within three years, and what did that experience do to their life expectancy and subsequent behavior?)

In all of the above, you can expect a suppression of group and individual consciousness and an amplification of group conformity. But even if you answered each of these deductions to our present general satisfaction, you would only have begun the process of understanding. Expect that, too, to change.

In our culture, when you make this approach to process thinking, you immediately raise a conflict over whether we individuals (and the groups we form) are reacting on the basis of information. Classical theories of individualism and free will that underlie consensus reality in our society assume a lawless character for the species as a whole. ("Human nature will never change.") Classical theory assumes that we are profoundly different from blind cells, that human individuals are informed, and that their reactions can be ascribed to a rational basis except in cases of accident and madness. To assume for the species as a whole a response pattern partly habituated (and thus unconscious by definition) threatens belief in reason, whose raw stuff (information) is assumed to be openly (consciously) available to all.

But television directors, politicians, the psychiatric profession, advertising/public relations firms, and sales directors are seeking out predetermined preferences to exploit mass biases. In a very real sense, we already are conducting conversations (communicating) with the species as an organism. For the most part, this communication is not directed at reason.

Process and the species-organism represent a complex mixture whose entire matrix can be twisted into new shapes by genius (Einstein) or madness (Hitler). The course of this process can be misread by an entire species despite wide evidence of disaster. To understand this matrix, consider the problems of rat control. We've learned that a quick-acting poison doesn't work well in eliminating rat colonies. Grain treated with a fast poison tends to kill only one or two rats from a colony. Rats translate the message “grain-kill”

without any need for verbalizing. We can, however, kill off entire colonies with a slow poison such as Warfarin. When one rat must go back to the grain seven or eight times before dying, other members of his colony tend not to make the lifesaving connection.

This gives you an idea of what limits may apply to a species' time sense. The presence of a threat may be known, but its context can remain frustratingly diffuse. What is this strange new lethal disease attacking my fellows? It calls up an ancient scenario out of primitive times when our beliefs were geared to living in the presence of an outer darkness that pressed upon us with terrifying force, mysteriously and inescapably painful. How do you placate the angry spirits of the poisoned waters?

THE LINEAR HABIT

Many things complicate our ability to recognize threats to the species. Not the least of these many may be contained in the observation of Soren Kierkegard: “Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward.”

This Janus-faced view of life comes right out of the old linear swamp. It carries an attractive sense of reality, but it assumes that our affairs flow with an absolute linearity from way back there to somewhere wa-a-a-ay up front. This allows for no optical illusions in time, no compressions or expansions, and it ignores much of our latest computer hardware (ten billion years in a nanosecond) as well

as other odd Einsteinian curves and spirals that intrude upon our consensus reality. It's well to recognize the low probability that one lonely cause underlies any event that inflicts itself upon an entire species. Neither Hitler nor Einstein sprang from a spontaneous and singular generating event. Worldwide pollution has no singular origin.

Yet, the linear orientation of our perceptions (1, 2, 3… A, B, C…; Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday…; January, February, March…) makes it extremely difficult to break away from the belief that we occupy a universe where there are straightforward linked cause-and-effect events plus a few other odd events we call accidents. We are habituated to a noncircular, noninclusive way of interpreting a universe whose circularity and all-inclusiveness keep cropping up in the phenomena we investigate. Events of tomorrow do change our view of yesterday; an ancient Greek's accident is our better-understood phenomenon. The linear habit remains, however. It dictates that we consign accidents to the unconscious. We keep loading the unconscious with events we do not understand. This burden inflicts itself upon our sense of reality.

Devotion to that linear consensus leads us inexorably into a confrontation with the mathematician who tells us: “We inevitably are led to prove any proposition in terms of unproven propositions.” He's telling me that all of my pet beliefs inevitably go back to a moment where I am forced to say: “I believe this because I believe it.” Faith!

Mathematics and physics may yet drive the odd realities over the brink. For instance, we now can project complex models of human

societies through analogue computers and within a few seconds get impressive readouts on the consequences of paper decisions projected for hundreds of years. This is, of course, subject to the omnipresent warning pasted over computers operated by cautious men of science. That warning reads: “Garbage in – garbage out.”

In engineering terms, we are looking for resultants – sums of social forces through which to examine our world. This often produces a more realistic approach than taking up the components one by one. Any auto mechanic know there are engine problems for which it's better to make ten adjustments at once. Still, singularity as a belief confounds our attempts to “repair the system.”

Technological playthings distort and amplify our performances to the point where we may believe we are discovering futures that we invent in the present. This may be the most elemental reality we have ever encountered, but the distortions born of mating our unexamined desires to our technology have tangled future and present almost inextricably. Future/past/present – , they remain so interwoven deep in the species' psyche that our day-to-day activities are often concealed from us. We put out our own Warfarin, unaware of lethal consequences and forgetful of where we have hidden it.

Few who examine our planetwide problems doubt that we live in a Warfarin world. The thrust of my argument is that we are not raising our awareness to the level demanded by the times, we are not making the connections between poisons and processes – to the despair of our species.

SUCCESS AS FAILURE

Planners often appear unwilling to believe that a history of success can produce the conditions for disaster. Rather, they believe that success measured in current terms is sufficient justification for any decisions about tomorrow. (To those who doubt that success can bring ruin to a community, look at the *Boeing Corporation*, a study of unusual poignancy in its demonstration of disaster brewed from success.)

You glimpse here a hidden dimension of powerful influences upon our survival. Here are the locked-up decisions predicated on capital investments and operating costs. Governments, large corporations, and service industries know they must build today according to long-range projections. Those projections tend to come from planners who know (unconsciously or otherwise) what the directors want to hear. Conversely, directors tend not to listen to disquieting projections. (Boeing's directors were being told as far back as the early 1950's that they had to diversify and that they should begin exploring the potential of rapid transit.)

Planning tends to fall into the absolutist traps I've indicated. Warm is better than cold, we'll listen only to the left hand. The limits under which powerful private assessments of “the future” are made predict mistakes of gigantic lethal magnitude.

If we define futurism as exploration beyond accepted limits, then the nature of limiting systems becomes our first object of exploration. That nature lies within ourselves. Some who say they are talking about “a future” are only talking about their own limits. The dominant pattern in current planning betrays a system of thinking that does not want to abandon old assumptions and that keeps seeking a suprise-free future. But if we lock down the future in the present, we deny that such a future has become the present – and the present has always been inadequate for the future.

My explanation of this pattern goes partly – where we commonly believe meaning is found – in printed words (such as these), in the noise of a speaker, in the reader's or listener's awareness, or in some imaginary thought-land between these. We tend to forget that we human animals evolved in an ecosystem that has demanded constant improvisation from us. In all our systems and processes, including the human brain, our consciousness, and our thinking patterns. The virtuosity of our customary speaking tends to conceal from us how this behavior is dominated by improvisation. This non-awareness carries over into that “talking” with our universe by which we shape it and are shaped by it.

It dismays some people to think that we are in some kind of jam session with our universe and that our survival demands an ever-increasing virtuosity, an ever-improving mastery of our instruments. Whatever we may retain of logic and reason, however, points in that direction. It indicates that creation of human societies probably should become more of an art form than a plaything of science.

To plan for the future, to attempt to guide ourselves into “the better life” projected by our utopian dreams, we are involving ourselves with profound creative changes and influences. Many of these already are at their work unrecognized around us. Inevitably, we change our frames of reference, our consensus reality. It becomes increasingly apparent that today's changes occur in a relativistic universe. It is demonstrably impossible in such a universe to test the reliability of one expert by requiring him to agree with another expert. This is a clear message from those physicists who demonstrate the most workable understanding or our universe-in-operation. After Einstein, they tell us: all inertial frames of reference are equivalent.

This is saying that there is no absolute frame of reference (local reality) within the systems we recognize, no way to be certain you have measured any absolutes. The very act of introducing the concept of absolute into a question precludes an answer with sensible meaning. (Which hand will you believe, the “cold” hand or the “warm” one?) It serves no purpose to ask whether absolutes exist. Such questions are constructed so as to have no answer in principle.

Accordingly, both Pakistan and India could be equally right and equally wrong. This applies also to Democrats and Republicans, to Left and Right, to Israel and the United Arab Republic, to Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics. Remember: “We inevitably are led to prove any proposition in terms of unproven propositions.” We do not like unproven propositions.

If we face up to this consciously, that might cut us away from everything we want to believe, from everything that comforts us in a universe of unknowns. We would be forced to the realization that the best logic we can construct for a finite system (which describes our condition at any selected moment) might not operate in an infinite system. No matter how tightly we construct our beautiful globes of local reality, no matter how many little Dutch boys we assemble to apply fingers to any holes that may appear, we still have built nothing more than a dike, impermanent and essentially fragile.

BREAKING PATTERNS

It would seem that a futurist concerned with our survival and our utopian dream needs to listen, to observe, and to develop expertise that fits the problems as they occur. But that is not the pattern that dominates human behavior today. Instead, we shape our interpretations of our problems to fit existing expertise. This existing expertise defends its local reality on the basis of past successes, not on the demands of our most recent observations.

The consequences of such an approach can be deadly far beyond the circle in which the planning decisions originate. And in the hierarchical arrangements of human societies it often is just one person who finally makes the profound choice for us all. The reasons behind such decisions can be perfectly justified by the contexts within which they are made. (Have I ever failed you before?)

In the universe thus described, we are destined forever to find ourselves shocked to awareness on paths that we do not recognize, in places where we do not want to be, in a universe that displays no concern over our distress and that may have no center capable of noticing us. God-as-an-absolute stays beyond any demands we can articulate. The old patterns of thinking, patched together out of primitive communications attempts, continue to hamstring us.

Play a game with me, then, and maybe you'll understand what I am attempting to describe. Here's a list of numbers arranged according to a logical order. The solution to that order embodies what I mean when I suggest we leap out of our conventional limits. The numbers: 8, 5, 4, 9, 1, 7, 6, 10, 3, 2.

As you consider how the way we approach a question limits our ability to answer, I'd like you to reflect upon a short paraphrase of Spinoza, changed only to read “species” where the original read “body.”

No man has yet determined what are the powers of the species; none has yet learned from experience what the species may perform by mere laws of nature (chemical, genetic or other) or what the species may do without rational determination. For nobody has known as yet the frame of the species so thoroughly as to explain all of its operations.

Source: http://members.lycos.co.uk/Fenrir/ctdinterviews.htm

Science Fiction and a World in Crisis

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Washington's Mount Olympus is a pile of dirt and rock with snow on its crown. I can see it out of my study window. It helps sometimes to look out at it and remind myself of Laotze's words:

> The soul may be a mere pretense.
>
> The mind makes very little sense.
>
> So let us value the appeal
>
> Of what we can taste and feel.

If you write science fiction in a crisis-ridden world, the value of the pragmatic reasserts itself regularly. You have to say to yourself: "As I see it…" We need to touch base on occasion the way Antaeus had to touch the earth. If we don't, we lose an important contact and we may write sentences such as this one from NASA's Apollo 14 documentary:

> Astronauts Alan B. Shepard, Jr., and Edgar D. Mitchell were climbing a steepening slope (on the moon); their maps indicated they were approaching their destination, the rim of Cone Crater where rocks have remained unchanged *since time began*. (Italics mine)

Since time began?

You see it all around in crisis after crisis – how deeply we remain immersed in the Cartesian division between material and mental. It is virtually impossible for anyone conditioned in a Western culture to think with any empirical directness about Infinity – about a universe without beginnings and without end, a universe of continual temporary conditions, one merging into another forever.

Time does not begin in such a universe. A beginning may be only the moment you notice something move against that background which ancient India called “the void.”

I found it necessary to begin this way because of something that happened to me at a recent cocktail party. The setting was so common to our culture that it has become a cliché – and so was the tall, heavyset fellow with the bushy black beard who came up to me with a question often asked of science fiction writers.

“You science fiction guys have imagined every problem the world could face. What the hell do we do about this planet that’s ready to come apart?”

It is to laugh, but bitterly.

With alcohol-induced clarity, the fellow had just realized that the end of the Vietnam war had changed very little in respect to a world balanced precariously on the edge of an explosive finale. The threat of ultimate war is still with us and just as potent as ever.

But I’ve thought about every problem, so…

My God! Every problem? Not by a long shot on a rainy Monday. Otherwise I’d be out of work. In common with the rest of my fellows, I do not have the book of answers. Sorry. I do, however, know something about crises. They’re the stuff of good stories. If you write fiction, you become fairly adept at solving unsolvable problems which (and this is crucial) you have first created that you may solve them entertainingly.

Straw men.

But every now and then, we hit pay dirt. Realpolitik catches up with

fiction. Industry just happens to manufacture the device we imagined – Telestar, Waldos, the Bracone collapsible oil barge…

Technology turns a corner around which we have peeked.

You can wake up, as did Cleve Cartmill in 1944, to find yourself answering the questions of suspicious minions from the FBI. “Yes, Mr. Cartmill, but you speak in this story of an atomic bomb. Where did you get that idea? And why did you set your story at Manhattan Beach?”

Cartmill had pretty well laid out the developmental process for an atom bomb, which was then the private domain of the top-secret Manhattan Project. It was a good story and John Campbell published it.

But who could believe such a coincidence?

And who can convince a security-conscious minion of the government that there is no way to keep these things secret when knowledge about the steps leading up to such developments permeates an entire layer of world society. There is no way. Despite Descartes, mental and material do not separate.

But nobody seems to believe that a mere science fiction writer can think up such things out of his own head. The question has a definite accent to it: “Where’d you get that idea (pause), out of your head?”

The head of a science fiction author is not supposed to produce the stuff of real crises. We’re supposed to entertain, to amuse, to provide interesting food for thought and, occasionally, to bring people up short with a gasp or two.

Vide *1984*.

Vide *Brave New World*.

When you think about it, you realize these two works have influenced our world. Neither Brave New World nor 1984 will prevent our becoming a planet under Big Brother’s thumb, but they make it a bit less likely. We’ve been sensitized to the possibility, to the way such a dystopia could evolve.

If we’re to understand the relationship between such fiction and a world of real crises, it pays us occasionally to look out at Mount Olympus and append some footnotes.

With the exception of the fancy eugenics, BNW presents us with a

society that might've been planned by a committee of behavioral psychologists. In many ways, it resembles nothing more than a worldwide *Walden Two*. The universal infant conditioning, the College of Emotional Engineering, and the system of World Controllers ruling by scientific behavioral modification would appear to meet with approval of *W-Two* author, B.F. Skinner, who, you may recall, has been described as the world's foremost social engineer.

Both Orwell and Huxley were concerned with the ability of our democratic institutions to survive the onslaughts of overpopulation and rising industrialism – mass business, mass government, mass automation, etc. They were concerned with their own understanding of that concept which we call "freedom."

Pause now and consider certain practices by the United States federal government, by state and local authorities here and elsewhere in our world. Consider wiretapping, mandatory lie-detector tests, the keeping of extensive files on citizens alleged to be dissenters, refined electronic surveillance, manipulation of the media, the deliberate distortion of meanings in language. All of this foreshadows *1984*.

Make special note of the ways that have been developed to create demands for goods: the manufacture of goods so shoddy they break down at a predictable rate; a constant stream of "new" models which are not really new; advertising propaganda to maintain demand for goods that have little relationship to human survival (the appeal to sexual and status longings, etc), and recall Huxley's words:

“As political and economic freedom diminishes, sexual freedom tends compensatingly to increase.”

Does that sound familiar?

When people such as Theodore Roszak in *The Making of a Counter Culture* take up these themes, then science fiction leaves the realm of fiction and enters a shadowland between myth and reality. Roszak comments on the repressive desublimation factor in “*Playboy* sexuality” which has taken over American society: “… casual, frolicsome and vastly promiscuous. It is the anonymous sex of the harem. It creates no binding loyalties, no personal attachments, no distractions from one’s primary responsibilities – which are to the company, to one’s career and social position, and to the system generally.”

Whether you begin from science fiction or from educational commentators such as Roszak, you can smell a crisis coming.

The promiscuity which Puritans thought would undermine the foundations of society has been co-opted by technocracy and channeled in a way that makes it serve the establishment – maintaining a state of non-freedom, of economic servitude, as well as stability for a social system that allows the technocracy to go its own way.

Our society tolerates drugs such as tobacco, alcohol, barbiturates, and tranquilizers because they serve a useful social purpose. They enable people to endure an otherwise intolerable existence, to remain on the production/consumption treadmill.

Perhaps *1984* isn't all that far away and we may already be living in a *Brave New World*.

In a society of Spocked babies and spooked adults, it gets easier to understand why marijuana, acid, and other drugs are tolerated to help keep the populace under control, especially when you add the mind-numbing properties of TV (audio-visual soma). Whoever said that the realities of twentieth-century industrial mass society cannot be endured without outside help may not be far wrong and the phenomenon of the black-bearded fellow asking a science fiction author for "the answer" becomes more acceptable.

According to Huxley, the greatest triumphs of propaganda have been accomplished not by doing something, but by refraining from doing something. Silence is greater than truth. "We'll appoint a committee to study this problem." The assumption by most of today's social engineering types is that independence is not the natural state of man.

Vide *BNW*.

Misfits are removed to their island – “all the people who, for one reason or another, have got too self-consciously individual to fit into community life. All the people who aren’t satisfied with orthodoxy, who’ve got independent ideas of their own.”

When they begin feeling out of sorts, the people of *BNW* get a jolt from hypnopaedic memory telling them to take a gram of soma, to enter the “warm, richly colored, infinitely friendly world of soma holiday.”

It’s clear that both in science fiction and the crisis-beset “real” world, drugs (like magic) need to be taken seriously and considered significant socially as well as individually. Can’t you visualize the sincere announcer on TV telling you:

“Drugs can be of significant value when used in a conscientiously applied program of personal hygiene and regular professional care.”

In the foreword to *BNW*, Aldous Huxley begins his prescription for the revolution to bring about the world of his book by telling you that, first, the government requires a greatly improved technique of suggestion to make everyone susceptible to the propaganda of the new society. He includes infant conditioning and the use of certain

drugs and a greatly transformed “norm” of sexual behavior from that which our fathers openly accepted. Where *BNW* pointed the way, Masters and Johnsons or Katchadourian and Lunde follow to fill in the gaps.

You’ve read all of this in science fiction, of course, and made many of the comparisons yourself, and it’s nice to think you’re sitting there with the avant-garde, first to know what tomorrow’s world will be. Let me recommend, therefore, that you study the records of history a bit more carefully. The sexual morality of BNW was the norm in the nineteenth-century Oneida colony of upstate New York. The Arab culture pioneered in the use of drugs to control the populace a thousand years ago.

If history teaches us that we learn nothing from history, then there may be little point in rehashing these observations on human behavior. Perhaps it’d be better to save this material for fiction, that world of perfection, which is where things operate the way I want. In the “real” world it has all happened before. There’s no such thing as a new crisis, just instant replays on the old ones.

It’s fun to play the game, though, and to hope that your newest window dressing on the old patterns will tell us something really new. After all, science fiction in its dealings with crises for the sake of story, does indicate other avenues open to us.

We can, for example, assume that behind any accepted morality,

fictional or otherwise, is the function of maintaining social stability. When emotions brought out by repression become socially disruptive, dangerous to social harmony, then the repression may be eliminated by the society itself. Our “new morality” so shocking to Middle America could be an evolutionary force to eliminate potentially disastrous social conditions. It could be the social organism’s way of dealing with the need for sexual expression without the dangers inherent in producing too many new humans.

As you can see by the foregoing, the science fiction mind is always ready with alternative possibilities – which is part of the game of human change.

Much of our lives we’re breaking camp from one set of known surroundings and heading off into an unknown *Other Place* which we hope will become just as familiar as today’s surroundings. That’s the stuff of science fiction and it is, as well, the stuff of world crises. The hierarchical levels of a future society may very well be sharply defined categorical birth into different intelligence classes, a birth prearranged from conception. Science of the pragmatic world may give us the aristocracy of the IQ which previous aristocracies attempted to create by mating only with their “own kind.” We may look back on *1984* and *BNW* as relatively mild and amusing examples of fictional exploration in social engineering.

Much depends upon the way we integrate the myth our world of our wishes into the physical experiences that define who we are as an animal society. This is the crux of all attempts to diagnose current conditions and form some articulated whole that expresses the

nature of world crises. If we say, on the one hand, that our world suffers from a certain kind of disease that brings on these recurrent crises, then under present conditions of dependence upon words, the disease we “have” becomes more important than who we are as a people. This could be why we, as a society, suspect the large social diagnoses of the engineers and psychiatrists. We know with a sure and ancient instinct that to be treated and “cured” of such a disease could take from us both the why and the who of our identity.

Certain pitfalls exist in our tendency toward over-dependence upon the professional expert, the specialist. When we turn toward such counsel, we begin by admitting that we are hopeless and require their superior guidance. At the very moment we seek such help, we have created a particular kind of non-symmetrical relationship: the professional, all-powerful and knowledgeable on one hand, and the dependent, abject one on the other hand. One side assumes all of the healthy viewpoint and the other side takes on all of the sickness. With a kind of suicidal totality, we turn matters over to the professional, saying: “Heal me.”

This is the situation upon which the politician capitalizes and which psychiatry/psychology have been unable to resolve. Instead, the so-called mental sciences have been seeking political power for many years. That was to be expected as a natural outcome of their power posture. They assumed the position of *all-health* dealing with *all-sickness*. Such non-symmetrical relationships inevitably produce shattering crises.

Remember the old Chinese curse: “May you live in interesting

times.”

The Chinese of those days valued a serene existence. Their utopian ideal was based on a sophisticated appreciation of the world, on the guiding of the senses into heightened awareness. It’s not surprising that Zen found wide acceptance in such a culture. The inner world obviously was where one dealt with consciousness. Thus, the external crises were to be avoided. Ignorance, poverty, starvation, and disease were the evils. War was a class monopoly and was to be kept in its own place. Famous generals could not hope for the status of famous teachers. Fear was a tool of statecraft and was to be used to keep down the size of government. Apotheosis (transubstantiation to an immortal state with one’s ancestors) was a necessary part of the culture.

In such a setting, interesting times were times that changed dramatically, rolled on the wheel of crisis. Those old Chinese could have made common cause with Middle America. Both look to the ideal society as one of social unity, of togetherness as the ultimate social achievement. The distinguishing of one individual from another has to be held within tight limits. To be different is to be dangerous.

God bless the child who has his own. That’s the catch phrase, but don’t sing it too loudly except on Saturday nights.

This is both a pure and abstract notion. It is the seeking for solace

against the physical isolation of the individual identity. It is a barrier against mortality akin to ancestor worship. It is also the stuff of paradox because it brings with it dreams of gods, of nations, and professional experts as the all-powerful arbiters of our lives. This necessarily creates the conditions of crisis because it fails to deal with change. It does not square with a changing universe.

Thus we get the stuff of crises and science fiction.

On this relatively small planet well out into the edge of a minor spiral galaxy, we have been simultaneously breeding ourselves an abundance of humans while creating an abundance of material things for a small proportion of that burgeoning life. Against a backdrop of false absolutes, we reduce the variables that we permit in our societies, in our individuals, and in our possessions. By our acts, we demonstrate that we want mass production of a standard human who employs standardized consumer goods. We execute this mass production of sameness in a largely unexamined, unconscious manner.

But *nature* constantly evolves, trying out its new arrangements, its new kinds of life, its differences, its interesting times, its crises. Against such movement, we attempt our balancing acts, our small sallies at equilibrium. In the dynamic interrelationships of the universe around us, we look for models upon which to pattern our lives. But that universe greets us with complexities everywhere we turn. To talk about just one element, carbon, for example, we are forced to deal with combinations whose complexities we have not yet exhausted.

You've read about such things in science fiction; you see the conditions around you which touch your own life. Still, you seek *the* answer.

Our land of plenty was supposed to lead the way to a world of plenty for humankind. Instead, we followed a more ancient pattern, becoming like the worst in those we opposed. We lead the world today in the potential for mass violence. The material doldrums of the 1950s trended gradually into this era, and instead of plenty we find ourselves in a world where, if we shared the world's food supply equally with every living human being, all of us would starve.

Malthus pointed the way. Science fiction has been filling in the possibilities of a Malthusian world ever since. If we experience massive human die-back in such areas as the island of Java, Malthus and science fiction will have been proven correct.

But at what a cost!

We approach this next level of crises as though we lived constantly in the presence of devils. If no devils appear, we manufacture them. *Give us this day our daily devil.* To counter the unconscious (and conscious) tensions aroused by such a process, we seek seclusion, individual privacy – all the while breeding ourselves out of that

vanishing commodity.

Creativity of any kind has become the modern devil.

And the oddball is dangerous.

We want to end all conflicts. They not only kill us, they never seem to produce the glorious and victorious end conditions which we verbally attach to them. But now that the Vietnam war has been brought near a close, we awaken to the realization that we still live in a world threatened by imminent, totally destructive, mass conflict. We cure the disease and find we still suffer from it.

Paradox, paradox: the stuff of crises and of science fiction.

We walk across the ground of our fears and our movement stores up static electricity which shocks us every time we touch the real world. Somehow, we are not grounded to the universe. But we go doggedly about those tasks we consider necessary, emulating the muddle-through quality of the ideal nineteenth-century British public servant. And all the time, we fight to repress the sinking feeling that everything we do is useless, that the next crisis will leave us destitute.

Why can’t the world be more like me?

Middle America *über alles*!

On the wall of a small hotel in Kabul, Afghanistan, there is a notice, which reads as follows:

Menu

Acid - $1

Opium - 30 Afghanis

Heroin - 70 Afghanis

Ask Abdul

The hotel, populated in season by large numbers of ex-patriate American youths, represents a full retreat from crises – retreat from crisis into crisis.

You may find it strange that I read this and other signs as heralding

hard times ahead for science fiction as we have known it. This is how I read it:

The current utopian ideal being touted by people as politically diverse (on the surface, but not underneath) as President Richard M. Nixon and Senator Edward M. Kennedy goes as follows – no deeds of passion allowed, no geniuses, no criminals, no imaginative creators of the new. Satisfaction may be gained only in carefully limited social interactions, in living off the great works of the past. There must be limits to any excitement. Drug yourself into a placid "norm." Moderation is the key word. And how the old Chinese would have loved that!

In a word, you can be a Bozo, but little else.

Rolling Stone in the fall of 1972 described this world of bozoness:

"Bozos are the huge, fat middle waist in the land. They clone. Everybody tends to drift toward bozoness. It has Oz in it. They mean well. They like their comforts. The Bozos have learned to enjoy their free time, which is all the time."

Among the secondhand, limited excitements permitted in the Bozo world would be reading science fiction, but its creators are in for harsh treatment unless they hew strictly to well-worn concepts

already treated by the field, unless they eschew anything truly new or pertinent.

No more *1984*s. No untimely accuracy. You must stick to such things as *Walden Two*, which is really Edward Bellamy brought up to date. You must look backward, only backward.

Creativity, however, requires wide open alternatives. It fits with the random chaos of the unknown universe and with those limited (and limiting) laws which we learn apply for our temporary benefit. Science fiction has functioned well against such a backdrop. The more diverse our work, the more profoundly creative, the more luxurious the literature.

The luxury of unbridled investigation carries its own ongoing sense of excitement, one of the attractions of the best science fiction. What will I find around the next corner? This is one of the marvelous lures of pure science, as well. And pure science already is finding itself in the public doghouse. The levelers ask: “Why’d you bastards discover atomic weapons and lasers and bacteriological weapons and all that crazy stuff?”

One of the answers goes this way: “I was driving down this road, see, and there it was.”

“But how’d you find the right road?”

“Well, I took that turn back there a ways and, you see, there it was.”

The best science fiction and pure science assume an infinite universe where we can look up at the blue sky. That’s our playing field. Eton is too confining. That sense of infinity (anything can happen) gives us the proper elbow room. But an infinite universe is a place where crimes of passion can occur, where any dream can be dreamed and realized. The reward of investigating such a universe in fiction or in fact is not so much reducing the unknown but increasing it, opening the way to new dangers, new crises. This implies disorder when what we suppose we’re seeking is order. The story plot and the scientific law represent order, but chaos lurks at their edges.

Order equals law, a key word for humans.

Law indicates the form by which we attempt to understand order. It enables us to predict and otherwise deal with order. And we don’t like the mathematician suggesting to us that we occupy a universe of multiple orders, plural, and thus of multiple laws.

Humans want beginnings and nice anthropomorphic motives and happy endings. But motives (intent) are not required against an

infinite field of laws. The assumption of infinity opens quite a contrary view. Infinity does not require beginnings or endings. Intent does require them. The essence of infinity is no-beginning, no-ending. Without ends, there can be no ultimate (absolute) goals, no judgments, and the whole concept of sin and guilt (products of intent) falls apart. Such concepts as sin-guilt-judgment require beginnings which are cut out of an infinitive system, boxed-in, articulated and defined for human motives. They occur as segments of a linear system whose infinite surroundings must be represented as nonlinear. Such concepts are ways of dealing with finite, human-created and human-interpreted laws, and are only incidentally (in the fullest meaning of that word) related to infinity.

To project a god, a government, or a professional expert against such a backdrop, we set limits.

Law and order represent a system of dealing with interesting times such that we set our preordained limits upon crises. Law and order is a breeder of crises because it cannot predict everything that will happen.

To accept a universe where anything can happen, however, is to accept a hellish insecurity which is, in itself, an ongoing crisis. We don't know how to understand such a universe. The essence of something we don't understand is that it appears chaotic; it lacks recognizable order. There's a devil in anything we don't understand. It is menacing. It is an outer darkness in which we not only lose a recognizable ground upon which to stand, but we also lose all sense of identity. It is a vision of hell. We must defeat such a devil at all

cost.

And we forget that we created this devil.

We say, instead: “This is who I am. This is my absolute god. These are my absolute laws. Get thee behind me, Sathanus!”

Thus, we strive for the illusion of all-knowing in an infinite universe where anything can happen. We seek the basic law to explain a never-ending All which stands as a seething backdrop, as the Vedantic void, that ultimate chaos from which any form of law or order must derive.

In *The God Makers*, I have a religious leader say it this way:

“We have a very ancient saying: the more god, the more devil; the more flesh, the more worms; the more property, the more anxiety; the more control, the more that needs control.”

The lost existence of our Eden-Paradise gets further and further from a dichotomized, man-limited world, less attainable every instant. We must turn to science fiction for the temporary illusion, for the *prediction* that once again we will enter into the blissful universe of godlike order. You would be astonished how often science fiction

editors get the Adam and Eve story as the first effort of the aspiring writer. It has become the cliché of clichés in our field. We attempt to deny Eden's ultimate, unchanging conservatism, it's essential boredom for the questing intelligence. The very language in which these concepts are couched provides a retreat to match the menu on the Kabul hotel's wall.

Santaroga Barrier puts it thus:

"We sift reality through screens composed of ideas. (And such ideas have their roots in older ideas.) Such idea systems are necessarily limited by language, by the ways we can describe them. That is to say: language cuts the grooves in which our thoughts move. If we seek new validity forms (other laws and other orders) we must step outside language."

We must stand silently and point at the new thing.

This represents an essential Zen concept.

Santaroga portrays an extreme reaction against many of the problems challenging human survival in the 1970s. Technology worship, endless economic growth, human alienation, the limitless powers implied by scientific investigation – all products of today's American-style society – are rejected by Santaroga's counterculture.

Santaroga attempts to control change and thus to scale down both the physical and social pace of human life. Isolated, but with a purpose to their hibernation, Santarogans try to make better people for a static world which is necessarily depicted as a valley, a place of high walls, both natural and manmade.

It is the mind, not the artifacts of human ingenuity, on which Santarogans concentrate. However admirable their intentions, the result of their behavioral control is not totally positive. Santaroga is dangerously stable, poised always on the edge of destructive crisis. Its people seem happy but without individual vitality. They are not enslaved by technological innovation, but neither are they much concerned about creativity and personal development. Life for the Santarogan revolves around an archaic super-loyalty to the community which is deliberately akin to nation-state patriotism.

Santarogans indulge in their own form of the step-by-step behavioral engineering you see in *Walden Two*. They also remain self-suspended in time. They have chosen a rather static “good life” to escape the dilemma that Alvin Toffler’s *Future Shock* details. The closed society creates its own Berlin Wall to keep out visitors, tourism, the threats inherent in things and people which are different.

Santaroga turns out to be Middle America and Old China brought up to date. As in *Walden Two*, Santarogans extol the merits of their society and permit selective immigration. Essentially, both Santaroga and *Walden Two* ask whether human happiness can be achieved through positive reinforcement techniques and tampering

with chemical and psychological characteristics of the species. It is not a question to pass over lightly because every extant culture does those very things, although in a relatively haphazard manner. The difference is that *Walden Two* and *Santaroga Barrier* describe a conscious, “scientific” approach to social conditioning.

Why is it, then, that most people detect something sinister in such a process to produce humans who would behave in a predictable, although “socially beneficial” way? Behavioral control and happiness appear to be inextricably linked in the contemporary social engineering field. Most humans feel, however, that such tampering would not produce happiness, but would force us into new crises.

We have always distrusted Machiavelli.

Is it the coldness? The manipulation of humans by humans? Is it the inevitable separation into the *users* and the *used*, the abject seekers after help and the all-knowing helpers?

The character, Gilbert Dasein, sees the common identity of Santaroga thusly:

“In there behind the facade, Santaroga did something to its people. They lost personal identity and became masks for something that was the same in all of them…a one-pointedness…such that every

Santarogan became an extension of every other Santarogan."

Arthur Clarke, in *Childhood's End*, states it baldly; his entire story represents a comment on differences. He is saying to you that, while men have been able to adapt to wide differences in climate, geography, and threats to survival, they have not always been able to adapt to differences in one another. In the end, the children of Clarke's Earth become what can only be interpreted as a single identity and that identity reflects the myth structure of Western man. Witness the way anthropological studies of acculturation focus on the difficulties a non-Western "underdeveloped" people confront while undergoing cultural assimilation by the West. Almost no studies have been done on the difficult adaptation problem faced by Western men when thrust into a non-Western society.

In fact, Western men tend to refuse such adaptation; we must force others to imitate us. One does not go native!

Why can't the universe be more like me?

Through what is probably a profound unconscious process, the flow of Western scientific/technological development takes on much the same characteristics. Most of science fiction has followed the same channel.

Nature, as a system of systems which we attempt to reduce to some kind of order, has been conceived by much of Western science as flowing from a unified field. Eastern researchers have taken a quite contrary viewpoint, saying that a unified field is inconceivable because even such a mental construct would tend to flow and change. To the Eastern viewpoint, seeking after a fixed, unchanging unified field is the ultimate in conservative thinking. It requires a god (or government, or society of professional experts) who must be worshiped by a mass consciousness that agrees slavishly with everything coming from the god, the government, or the experts.

It is a question of the relationship between human consciousness and the rest of the universe, whether by oneself or through intermediaries. Western culture, selling itself as the last outpost of individualism, has been as quick to stifle this characteristic as the East has been. The West has merely been less aware, and thus less candid, about the consequences of its major decisions. It is also a characteristic of the West that we must believe in absolutes. We demand them. Our language assumes them. We ask: “What *is* it?” And we say: “It either *is* or it *isn’t*.”

The verb “to be” betrays us.

Some of the East escaped this pitfall, but shared our tendencies toward the designed state, toward all-inclusive planning. We in the West seduced the East not through guns and massive power, but through engineering and planning. We captured most of the Eastern consciousness through engineered “contingency factors.”

An engineer of my acquaintance, servant of a powerful industry, when asked how his industry dealt with unknown contingencies in its long-range plans, said:

"We put a very large item in the budget and label it *contingency*. When the unexpected problem arises, if it's something money won't solve, we borrow facilities from other areas. We patch together a temporary solution until we can fill the gaps."

He went on to explain that the cost of such solutions was added later to the price which the public pays.

The question of absolutes – absolute solutions, absolute control – remains at the core of our science, our science fiction, and our approach to the solution of crises. It is, without a doubt, a battle of ingrained conservatism against outer chaos. Our utopian dreams of Eden are essentially conservative. We dream of a designed state wherein all the needs of the designers are secure. The main function of paradise is to entertain the needs of its human creators. Everyone must be a Bozo, happily comfortable, and thus limited in severely designed ways. There goes freedom of choice and in come *Santaroga* and *Walden Two*.

And God had better answer our prayers or we'll stop worshiping him. We'll vote for somebody else.

Few seem to have remarked the failure of demanding, ego-centered prayer as an argument for the current revival of satanism, witchcraft, and the like. The morality argument has fallen on hard times recently. Is it significant that both Barry Goldwater and George McGovern, candidates who offered themselves on morality platforms, lost by about the same proportion? There does appear to be an element of moralizing which says: “Why can’t you be more like me?”

When the chips were down, the American electorate may have said: “I’ll render my own moral judgments, thank you, and you can stuff that preacher pose.”

“Judge not lest ye be judged.”

In a sense, the struggles of our world, the crises arising from these struggles, and the stuff of our literary creations which reflect on the sensory universe represent a battle over human consciousness and its judgments. It’s not so much the minds and hearts of men that are at stake, but their awareness, the ideas that they are permitted. The struggle is over what is jusged valuable in our universe. Some of the antagonists follow a valuable system based on what can be measured, counted, or tabulated. They call this attitude “realpolitik.” Others base their standards on undefinable terms (undefinable because they change when we touch them) such as freedom, the rights of man, morality, the law of God…

These latter concepts defy programming. They must be continually reinterpreted. Witness the provisions for change in the United States Constitution. Islam provided for *Qazi*, judges who rule on secular matters as they derive from the Koran. *Qazi* must be “adult, free, Muslim and unconvicted of slander.”

Even as they are defined, these concepts fall outside current conventions of language which, as a set of symbols, remains finite and forever incomplete as a communications tool. Language opens up the reflection of thought, but by its very nature it also creates boundaries which appear insurmountable when posed against infinity. Language programs us, decides what we see and how we see it – what value judgment we place on anything we see. It is a root of prejudice and a limiter of perceptions as the embodiement of previous experiences which have been judged and catalogued. A new occurrence, pervaded by past perceptions, can be misconstrued. Power – secular and religious – is grounded in language. To assault the barriers of language is to do something dangerous to those who hold power because you open the way to new validity forms, new relationships, new laws, new ways of ordering society. Language represents an intervening force when we articulate our dream utopias. It prevents the realization of dreams. It is a sea of paradox, the substance of interesting times, curses and blessings and interesting stories.

Without language there would be no science fiction. What a crisis that would be!

Remember that Thomas More, the author who gave us the word *Utopia* and the dream of uniformity which the Old Chinese and the modern West find so enchanting, conceived his paradise in the form of the army – as does Skinner in Walden Two, as the pure-gospel Communists do, as the ancient Essenes did, as they did in the Oneida Colony… The rule appears so very simple:

"From every person according to his ability and to every person according to his needs."

This requires, however, that someone pass judgment on the needs and abilities, setting limits for them. More's *Utopia* provided public kitchens, public clothing repair shops, public laundries, etc., and guidelines for public behavior. I invite you to run your own survey. Ask people who have served in a branch of the military if they judged that a utopian existence. Personally, I recall an unspoken military commandment: "No individual crises allowed!"

Walden One, as seen through Thoreau's prejudices, was a place where the physical universe and the human spirit were to be interwoven harmoniously. Thoreau permitted no machines. Only the simplest things that the earth provided made up his tools. He professed himself perfectly contented in this condition.

Thoreau was not the first on that path. Rousseau drew similar

surroundings for his “noble savage.” St. Francis of Assisi employed his religious genius in rebellion against the lifestyles of the thirteenth century. To know God, it was necessary to discard all material possessions and marry nature. He said, in Christ’s words, “The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head.”

And then there were the earlier Pan god prototypes.

Pan is still with us.

Religion says: “Love is the answer.”

Science says: “There’s infinite energy out there just waiting for the right blend of imagination and creativity to bring it into the service of man.”

Rebellious youth says: “I’m going back to the farm.”

The Black says: “I want it all; share it!”

The American Indian says: “Give it back before you wreck

everything."

The social engineer says: "The key to our many problems remains in proper ordering and efficiency."

Listen to the social engineer because he has the inside track. Constant planning is a *Walden Two* obsession. That's familiar, isn't it? There we go again trying to impose our human order on an infinite universe.

However, when we narrow our frame of reference to the earth itself, as Thoreau did, it appears nature is a circle of delicately balanced systems which function efficiently only when man doesn't tamper with them. According to this view, man introduces chaos into what was originally a well-ordered plan, a system of symmetry and balances, and our attempts to establish our own kind of order open us to new complexities and crises.

But the desire for that abstract condition which we call *security* is implicit in our attempts to plan and order our lives. Disorder and chaos, the uncertainties of an infinite universe, threaten our peace of mind if not our physical comfort. Against such a background, behavioral (social) engineers such as Skinner can be heard pleading with us: "Please! Let us plan the world in a way that will set our minds at ease."

Translation: “Why can’t everyone be more like me?”

Because the mind at ease is a dead mind.

For civilization to exist as we know it, socializing processes must be strong and pervasively thorough. We are programmed in a multitude of ways, many of them operating unconsciously. By the time we awaken even faintly to the awareness that we have been socially conditioned, we find ourselves so indoctrinated that it’s difficult, if not impossible, to break the old patterns. The reinforcements of the system are powerful, many of them rooted in our animal past, and such systems have always been taken over entirely by the unconscious socializing programs. Our history also shows us that there has always been a majority in human society which never becomes aware of any need for change.

Survival pressures demanding that we evolve, grow, and change, however, continue to proliferate. We don’t want to change, but the floodgates open abruptly and we are overwhelmed.

Crisis!

Western tradition faces such demands with the concept of absolute control. You control the force which seeks to change your world.

You build a dam. You organize an army, a navy, an air force, a space service, more efficient police. You control the mob – even that mob in yourself. You control crime or the Mafia or the heroin traffic. Never mind that the control concept is in direct conflict with the American myth of individuality: the thing you fear must be controlled.

How the control concept works with the heroin traffic exemplifies what happens when we apply such pressures to a system without sufficient understanding of the system's internal behavior. Understand first that we have never discovered the upper limit to what the heroin addict will pay for his fix. The *demand impulse* of the system has a wide open upper limit, assumed infinite. Result: New Yorkers no longer live in Fun City. It's Fear City, made that way by this lack of understanding about the drug traffic. New York at night is effectively in a state of siege reminding one of the Mekong Delta at the height of the Vietnam War. Remember? "The night belongs to Charley." New Yorkers know their addicts will pay any price asked of them – your life, your household goods, anything.

But our dominant approach continues to operate out of that judgmental edict: *Heroin is nasty! Suppress it! Control it!!*

Even with our wildest control binge, however, the heroin traffic cannot be completely shut off. Some of it will get through. Remember the industrial engineer's comment on unknown contingencies? You put in a big contingency fund which is passed along to the consumer. Thus, some heroin will enter the United States because the head of a friendly government (or his uncle, or his sister) profits from the traffic; or because a federal agent has

been paid off; or because a high United States military officer has become an addict and is forced to use his facilities in the traffic; or, finally, because there are just too many holes through which the stuff can enter the nation.

It may cost a bundle to corrupt a federal official, a general, or a member of the State Department, but what the hell! The consumer will pay.

Ultimately, even if you are not an addict, that consumer-who-pays is you.

Our control efforts do little more than raise the price of the heroin that does get through. There's no upper limit on that price; this it's a wide open system.

If we really wanted to make a social adjustment to the heroin traffic, our actions would have to be somewhat different. We would have to accept first that our new approach would bring its own problems, that it would not be the final and absolute answer. But let's begin by assuming that it's not a good thing to allow a flow of money which can corrupt high officials and whole police departments. Let's assume that we want to stop that flow of corrupting cash. Very well; we take the profit out of the heroin traffic. We make the addict's fix available at a reasonable price – say for about fifty cents and under medical supervision. Then we prepare ourselves to deal with the other socio-medical aspects of the drug problem which would be

certain to surface under these new conditions. We could do this by understanding that we would be *dealing with* our mutual problem, not controlling it.

The one-pointed view of the “control it” approach invariably seduces us into making faulty assumptions. A fundamental cause of depressed urban areas has been found to be an excess of low-cost housing, rather than the housing shortages which we assumed to be the problem. City tax bases and legal structures gave incentives for not tearing down old buildings. But aging industrial buildings bring a decline in employment. Residential structures, as they age, attract lower income groups who are forced to use them at a higher population density. Jobs decline while population rises. Then, we come in with our development schemes and add more low-cost housing. This attracts more people from the low-income group into the area where jobs are decreasing. Our well-intentioned efforts help to create what Jay W. Forrester of MIT calls “a social trap.”

But that wasn’t what we wanted at all, was it? My God! We have to control this sort of thing!

Pakistan wanted to control its mosquitoes because the insects are a vector in a runaway malaria problem. However, Pakistan already suffered from the control *disease* which it caught from our Western culture. Having only enough funds and other resources for about a seventy-five percent mosquito control program, Pakistan demonstrated how well it had learned from the West by going ahead with an incomplete program. Result: the surviving mosquitoes are now resistant to former control techniques and malaria is again on a

runaway increase.

Attempting to control something “evil,” we precipitate a larger crisis. This may be a general human tendency. We feel helpless and alone when faced with large problems. Loneliness influences us to grab for the reassurance of anything offered to us as *the* solution. We want someone to assure us he has the answer and if we’ll only follow him…. It produces very odd behavior. The more complex a problem appears, the more apathetic we become; the more we turn away, the more strongly we grasp at a proffered solution which is presented with the promise of immediate relief. After all, Pakistan’s seventy-five percent mosquito control program *did* ease the malaria problem, temporarily.

We know that a single-pointed attempt to solve a problem is more likely to increase that problem’s complexity, make the problem harder to solve and, eventually, confront us with a crisis. The arguments for planetwide planning of human existence are relatively easy to accept, but the danger of massive, single-entry “solutions” remains as long as humans demand “immediate relief.”

It is astonishing how many college-level young people writing scenarios for a utopian rebuilding of world society begin their scenario with a worldwide disaster which kills off ninety percent or more of the human population. The scenarios then have the survivors (including the scenario author, of course) climb back to a planned civilization based on “nonrepressive freedom.” The quote is from an actual scenario by a twenty-year-old college junior.

Many of these young writers turn to Herbert Marcuse and Paolo Soleri (strange bedfellows, indeed) for supportive arguments, and they draw heavily from the works of such writers as Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury, Arthur Clarke, Ted Sturgeon, Isaac Asimov, Alfred Bester, Jack Williamson, Tony Boucher (W.A.P. White), John Campbell, Lester del Rey, Hugo Gernsback, Henry Kuttner, C. M. Kornbluth, Frederik Pohl, Fritz Leiber, Murray Leinster, Judith Merril, Margaret St. Clair (Idris Seabright), Clifford Simak, Robert Silverberg, William Tenn (Philip Klass), Jack Vance, Poul Anderson, A. E. van Vogt….

This is just a partial list of authors named as sources by students in university classes writing utopian scenarios. The science fiction authors are understandable in this list, but Soleri and Marcuse may need some explanation. Soleri provides them with the concept of arcologies (the single social super-structure, world village) and Marcuse outlines the psychomythology of rebellion. It is Marcuse who provides justification for killing the world's population down to a "manageable" size. Soleri leads the scenario writers to think of mining "the old cities" for materials to construct new super-urban communities linked by high-speed transit. We in science fiction provide social and technological innovations – the frosting on the supercake.

Inevitably, the scenario writers come down to hard judgments, decisions about the limits within which people will be forced to live. Even with London a half hour from New York City and most of the world's surviving population living underground to free the surface for agriculture and other human requirements, the consequent

accelerated demand for efficiency produces its own paradox which the scenario writers fail to resolve. They turn to more and more planning, a pervasive planning-octopus which reaches deeper and deeper into the individual life. Current concepts of freedom are abandoned “for the general welfare” and heavy social conditioning is accepted as “inevitable.” The demand for more god produces more satan. In come the Skinnerians and another crisis lurks at the end of this road.

Well, the Club of Rome and MIT in their study of the limits to human growth warned us what was happening. They said humans cannot go on increasing their numbers anarchically or exponentially beyond specific limits on this finite planet. They told us that growth must be selective, oriented, governed – that is, *planned*. Equilibrium must be maintained between the human population and its habitat. But this equilibrium cannot be reached if world society remains in a state of imbalance. Social justice and peace have definite ecological impact. But people *en masse* are loath to face up to issues which seem beyond human comprehension and *control*.

World population, which took hundreds of generations to reach present numbers, will double its size in the next thirty years. That means more than seven billion people – all demanding homes, schools, industry, entire cities, highways, harbors, and all the rest of it. No relevant body of opinion has so far faced up to this challenge. There is no *they* out there working on the big answer. Some sort of global planning may be undertaken in this decade, but political pitfalls line the way. The problem may become too big and complicated to be dealt with at all before even the first hesitant steps are taken.

Now *there* is a crisis for you.

Science fiction has explored such fancies and continues to explore them, but the basis for today's world planning concepts remains firmly seated in the commitment to absolute goals – political and physical. The holders of power in this world have not awakened to the realization that there is no single model of a society, a species, or an individual. There are a variety of models to meet a variety of needs. They meet different expectations and have different goals. The aim of that force which impels us to live may be to produce as many different models as possible.

As things now stand, you can be doing something that doesn't need to be done, which in fact is threatening to the survival of the human species, and yet you may be surrounded by a system which says you're doing your job well. The question "Should you be doing this at all?" is seldom asked in a species-wide context. We remain caught in the old "realities" with all of their myth-based self-justification.

Remember that a way to align your behavior with my desires is to get you to accept my definition of reality. Power rests in getting masses of people to accept your interpretation of events, and this is firmly seated in the structure of language. The words you use, how they are defined as descriptions of events, these carry the weight. Certain definitions are established (Freedom is freedom, dammit!) and these are imposed on our social experiences. The delusional content of the definitions is masked by social pressures. "Historical

knowledge" (any past definition) is marshaled to support the way we interpret new experiences. This all occurs within hierarchical structures where the occupants of niches may change but the structures, their myths, and their delusions remain. *"There must be an absolute authority which will make everything right…eventually."*

What one learns best in this world is how to please those farther up the ladder of authority. Education and social pressures cultivate individuals highly sensitive to the demands coming down to them from above. Most people believe what they are told to believe. The hedge against the unexpected, our social contingency factor, is to continue believing in the possibility of miracles. Of course, if you read the story of Jesus carefully, you'll note that the employment of miracles brought profoundly disruptive crises.

I must take another look at Olympus and recall that it's the source of the most disastrous earthquakes which have struck the northwest corner of the Unites States. Even a pile of dirt can turn against you.

Perhaps tomorrow I'll call my friend, the industrial engineer, and warn him: "There can be no absolute contingency allowance in an infinite universe."

As long as that's a condition of our existence, the explorations of science and science fiction will continue to turn up exciting discoveries.

But look out for the crises!

Source: http://makerofdune.tumblr.com/sfandcrisis

Introduction to the book “Eye”

PUBLISHED in “EYE”, BERKLEy BOOKS, 1985

It was a happy time, an educational time and I was utterly fascinated with making a film of my novel, *Dune*.

Early in the experience, I reverted to my background as an investigative reporter. What you read here is editorial comment (subjective) and reportage (as objective as I can make it).

When Sterling Lanier bought *Dune* for Chilton in 1963 we had no ideas about a movie. It was enough that the novel would be published and I could make jokes about Chilton, publisher of many how-to manuals, saying: "They'll want to re-title it How to Repair Your Ornithopter."

My first visit to Churubusco Studios in Mexico City put a different stamp on what it means to adapt a novel to the screen.

The snaking lines of electrical cables, the big yellow buses with "Dune" on the front, the mobs of people in and around the sound stages, the shops turning out props, costumes and special effects, the pulsing sounds of machinery, the glaring lights, the shouted orders – all said "industry."

It was poetic justice that we should be in Mexico, which had given me an inexpensive place to live when I began writing, and now *Dune* was providing well-paid employment for more than a thousand Mexicans.

I was glad to be back in Mexico and worried about it – a worry borne out by the troubles that plagued shooting the film there: the necessity to bribe Mexican officials before you could work or ship your film; shoddy equipment; some of the worst air in the world; and something apparently no one considered when deciding on a location – in at least some of the major cities, Mexican police are the criminal syndicate and corruption goes very high in the government.

The problems created by that corruption were no surprise, but the film industry itself? That was full of surprises.

I had heard many warnings about Dino De Laurentiis, yet I found him honorable and Trustworthy. He was a creative force, able to hold back and allow others room to work. Daughter Raffaella was a hardheaded businesswoman and an organizational powerhouse as concerned as a mother would be about those who depended on her.

Director David Lynch and I hit it off because I understood film to be a language different from English. He spoke it and I was a rank beginner.

To make a film, you translate, as though from English to German. Each of the world's languages contains linguistic experiences unique to its own history. You can say things in one language you cannot say in another. I was continually brought up short by the process of taking pages from Dune and shifting them to quick visual effects.

Example: *Dune* recreates a feudal society. To impress that on you, the film decor echoes Renaissance (and feudal) Italy – a stroke of genius and visually exciting.

Filming *Dune* did something else. I have David to thank for teaching me to write screenplays. During that education, I was able to

influence some decisions about the film, but I was unable to influence the ending or how much would be cut for the theater. From the approximately five hours of film in the original footage, only about two-fifths emerged from the cutting room.

What was cut?

Here's a partial list for the aficionados:

- The confrontation between Stilgar (Everett McGill) and Duke Leto (Jurgen Prochnow) where Stilgar spits on the table – the gift of his water.

- Development of the relationship between Shadout Mapes (Linda Hunt) and Jessica (Francesca Annis).

- Most of the love story between Paul Muad'Dib (Kyle MacLachlan) and Chani (Sean Young).

- The fight where Paul kills a Fremen and cries (giving water to the dead).

- Development of Kynes (Max Von Sydow) as the Imperial Planetologist and (most vital) the place of melange in a space-faring society.

- The relationship between Paul and his mentors: Duncan Idaho (Richard Jordan); Thufir Hawat (Freddie Jones); Gurney Halleck (Patrick Stewart), and Dr. Yueh (Dean Stockwell).

•The death of Thufir Hawat.

•The relationship between Paul and the Fremen widow, Harah (Molly Wryn).

•Scenes with Jessica and The Reverend Mother Mohiam (Sian Phillips) that would have made the Bene Gesserit sisterhood more understandable.

That's only a partial list.

Dino and Raffaella have talked about restoring the out-takes and making a miniseries (à la The Godfather). This may happen because Dino wanted a longer film all along.

The film of *Dune* is the result of a paradox – product of an industry that pretends to creativity and shies away from risks. Creation takes risks and that's the movie industry's dilemma. It's why so much control over creativity is in the hands of noncreative people. The reasoning behind their decisions is enlightening.

So many films are aimed primarily at early-to-late teens because this age group is more easily seduced by hype. These also are viewers with time and money and the inclination to join a date at the local Cineplex – powerful forces in the entertainment business.

Why a film of only about two hours?

Because that length can be shown more frequently on a day-to-day

basis, returning the investment quickly.

Don't condemn this out of hand. If investors had not been found to put up about forty million dollars, *Dune* would never have been filmed. And all of the essentials in the book are on film, even though all of it did not get to your screen.

Never forget it's an industry.

There is more here than meets the eye. One of the most important things is corporate politics. Big corporations are bureaucracies that often promote people who are best at covering their asses. Such people run scared, fearful of any suggestion they can make mistakes. And they surround themselves with others who run the same way.

Don't take risks.

Find out what succeeds and copy it.

Some of the most successful practitioners plagiarize and steal without a qualm, knowing they can stall their victims for years with expensive legal maneuvers. Creativity often has little to do with movie making except when writing promotional copy.

So what happened with the movie of *Dune*, the sixth biggest money-earner of 1984? What happened to the film that, at this writing, is still number two at the box office in Germany, Japan and France? I can only tell you what I saw.

There was scrambling and many false starts around the film's release, a clear signal of nervousness to audiences, including critics.

Critics who were inclined to be sympathetic were not permitted to see advance screenings.

The hype machine grinded into action, telling people to expect the complete *Dune*. My efforts were enlisted. I joined in wholeheartedly because I enjoyed the film even as cut and I told it as I saw it: What reached the screen is a visual feast that begins as *Dune* begins and you hear my dialogue all through it.

Overseas there were none of these negative signals and *Dune* set box office records. It was up 29 percent the third week in Great Britain. There were some 40,000 viewers each day the first three days in Paris alone, and to quote a French commentator: "Visually magnificent, rich enough for many repeat viewings."

In Europe you did not find critics bragging (as did one closet aristocrat on CBS): "I don't like movies that make me think." (He wants to feed you "bread and circuses" and keep you docile.)

Was it a success or a failure as a movie? I'm the wrong person to ask. Like me, *Dune* movie audiences, fans and newcomers, wanted more. They would have returned many times to see that "more." What they saw was true to my book, even though most of it stayed on the cutting room floor. *Dune* fans could supply the missing scenes in imagination but they still longed for those scenes.

Investors will get back their investment. There will not be large immediate profits as there might have been had they risked a longer film and satisfied the expectations they raised.

Catering to the lowest common denominator is the way you play the no-risk movie game, and David, with agreement from Dino and Raffaella, went against that directive.

I have my quibbles about the film, of course.

Paul was a man playing god, not a god who could make it rain.

Dune was aimed at this whole idea of the infallible leader because my view of history says mistakes made by a leader (or made in a leader's name) are amplified by the numbers who follow without question.

That's how 900 people wound up in Guyana drinking poison Kool-Aid.

That's how the U.S. said "Yes, sir, Mister Charismatic John Kennedy!" and found itself embroiled in Vietnam.

That's how Germany said "Sieg Heil!" and murdered more than six million of our fellow human beings.

Leadership and our dependence on it (how and why we choose particular leaders) is a much misunderstood historical phenomenon.

You see, we often get noncreative leaders, people most interested in preserving their own positions. They flock around centers of power. Such centers attract people who can be corrupted. That is a more descriptive observation than to say simply that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

If you are corruptible and your imagination is confined to worries about loss of power, you exist in a self-destructive system. Eventually, as all life does, you must encounter some thing you did not anticipate, and if you have not strengthened your creative resources, you will have no new ways for adapting to change. Adapt or die, that's the first rule of survival.

The limited vision of noncreative people is not difficult to understand. Creativity frightens the unimaginative. They don't know what's happening. Things new and unexpected arise from creativity. This threatens "things as they are." And (terrible thought) it underlines

illusions of omnipotence.

Besides, at least in the movie industry, they "know" an audience can be enticed into the theater by the right promotion. It's all a matter of "hype." You buy an audience.

The next time you watch a political campaign, ask yourself if that sounds familiar.

There is more.

David had trouble with the fact that Star Wars used up so much of *Dune*. We found sixteen points of identity between my novel and Star Wars. That is not to say this was other than coincidence, even though we figured the odds against coincidence and produced a number larger than the number of stars in the universe.

The fact that David was able to translate the written words into screen language speaks of his visual genius. If you were disappointed or wanted more, chalk it up to "That's show biz" and pray for the miniseries.

So much for the wonderful world of film and corporate decisions. I recommend you read Ed Naha's "The Making of Dune" and Harlan Ellison's two-part essay in the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. Screen them through my comments.

Don't get the idea from any of this that I'm ungrateful. Making that film was a superb education. And don't take this as a swan song. I'm alive and well and intend to stay that way while I continue writing as long as possible.

It's my opinion that David's film of Dune will also be alive and well long after people have forgotten the potboilers that come out of corporate boardrooms. This is based partly on the reactions of

everyone who worked on the film: They were sad to be parting when it was over and glad they had done it. The wrap party was a rare scene of happy nostalgia.

Francesca labeled it: "Hard work but great work."

Dune is a film addressed to your audio-visual senses in a unique way, forcing you to participate and not just sit there while it is "done to you." A miniseries restoring the out-takes would make this even more apparent.

That's how I wrote the novel, wanting you to participate with the best of your own imagination. I did not aim for the lowest common denominator and 'write down" to anyone. You and I have a compact and my responsibility is to entertain you as richly as possible, always giving you as much extra as I can. I assume you are intelligent and will enlist your own imagination. You'll see that when you read the Dune excerpt and the other stories in this collection.

Don't ask yourself if I succeeded or if the film succeeded.

The only valid critic is time. Does it endure? We can only guess and give our opinions. No one living today really knows, but people in the next century certainly will.

Bonus Material

Dune, Introduction by Norman Spinrad

From a German Dune re-issue edition by Heyne Verlag

Frank Herbert's *Dune* is one of the four most culturally-influential science fiction novels ever written, the other three being Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *1984*, and Robert A. Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*.

Of these four novels, *Dune* is the longest, most complex, the deepest by far, arguably the most successful on a literary level, certainly the most culturally important, and yet the least under-stood by critical establishments, both genre and general.

Brave New World, published way back in 1932, became the template for the science fictional dystopia, particularly of the "Friendly Fascism" variety wherein the dystopian reality emerges from a superficially utopian surface, but read now seems stilted, schematic, and amateurish; inferior, in fact, to Huxley's own later science fiction.

1984 is much more skillfully written, far more politically and psychologically sophisticated, a classic that remains literarily valid

long after its political relevance has faded, written by a so-called "mainstream" writer, who, unlike Huxley, wrote no other significant science fiction.

Stranger in a Strange Land was written by an acknowledged master of science fiction who never wrote anything else of significance, but it is not Heinlein's best novel any more than *Brave New World* is Huxley's. Structurally, it breaks in half rather clumsily, on a stylistic level it is inferior to *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. It has become Heinlein's sigil novel largely because of its centrality to the evolution of the Counterculture born in the 1960s and its unfortunate notoriety as the novel that inspired the discorporative depredations of Charles Manson and his "Family."

Dune, as a cultural icon, partakes of some of the aspects of all three of the other books, but is something much more. Like *Brave New World*, it has become the template for a generation and more of imitative works, including all too many sequels by Herbert himself. Like 1984, it is a novel written on a level of sophistication that will preserve it as a literally classic long after its cultural relevance has faded.

And like *Stranger in a Strange Land* only more so, *Dune* was a formative literary factor in the cultural revolution of the 1960s, and in a much more positive manner, which is why it is so generally and deliberately misread as a novel centered on “ecological” issues.

The truth is far more complex and, even today, far more politically incorrect, and therefore still far more politically dangerous. After thirty years and more and millions of copies sold, it is hard to realize that back in the early 1960s this now famous and best-selling classic had a difficult time getting published. And it so happens that I was around for part of the story.

Dune was first published in *Analog*, John W. Campbell, Jr.'s

magazine, as two separate "novels" in serial form. “Dune World” was serialized in 1963-64, and "The Prophet of Dune" in 1965, though as Frank Herbert told me in personal conversation much later, *Dune* had always been conceived and written as one novel.

And indeed, as an avid reader of each installment of the “Dune World” serialization as a young writer just starting out, I was deeply disappointed, not to say outraged, by the way the last installment seemed to end in mid-air. By the time Analog began to serialize “The Prophet of Dune,” I was being published in the magazine myself. But I was still an avid reader of the serialization. And I was working at the Scott Meredith literary agency, which was trying to place the novel with a publisher. Despite the success of the serialization, this wasn't easy, and the literary agency finally had to settle for selling the American trade edition rights for a small advance to Chilton, an obscure house, who brought out the hardcover in 1965 in a very modest printing.

Only later, when Ace Books reprinted *Dune* in paperback, did it begin to slowly gather momentum to become the long-term best-seller that we know it as today.

Why this difficult publishing history of a novel that was to become an enormous commercial success over time? The answer must be sought within the pages of *Dune* itself. And understood within the context of the times in which it was written and published.

In superficial plot outline, the story of *Dune* seems not only simple but something of a derivative cliche.

Due in part to the machinations of the Harkonnen clan and its evil leader Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, the Padishah Emperor, ruler of the human interstellar empire, banishes the hereditary enemy of the Harkonnens, the Atreides clan, led by Duke Leto Atreides, to rule the desert planet Arrakis.

Bereft of any other significant economic interest, Arrakis is the sole source of the "spice" melange, the psychoactive drug that allows the navigators of the Spacing Guild to move their starships faster than light through a form of hyperspace and thus maintain the coherence of this unlikely pseudo-medieval interstellar culture.

It's all a Harkonnen set-up, in collaboration with the Emperor, to destroy the Atreides and gain control of Arrakis and the spice themselves.

Unrest is fomented, Harkonnen mercenaries arrive, a war starts, Leto is assassinated, the Harkonnens take over, and his heir Paul, along with the boy's mother Jessica, flee into the wilds of the deep desert.

There they are taken in by the Fremen, a Bedouin-like tribe battling the oppressive rule of the Harkonnens. Through a series of feats, rituals, initiations, and battles, young Paul becomes the leader of the Fremen, turns them into a People's Liberation Army, and eventually not only reclaims his rightful throne but becomes Emperor himself and a kind of God-King of this fictional universe.

An oft-told story?

Yes.

Derivative?

Yes?

A cliche?

No.

Simple?

Not at all.

For what we have here in outline is Frank Herbert's version of what Joseph Campbell argues is the basic human story in his landmark work of mythic analysis and literary comparative cultural anthropology, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*.

The Hero (Paul) is dispossessed of his rightful heritage (Leto's throne) by the forces of evil (the Harkonnens) and must flee into the wilderness(the Arakeen desert). There he encounters his spiritual guide and master who educates him in mystical and practical lore. Interestingly enough, as we shall see later, in *Dune*, Herbert divides this archetype into three masters, one for each level of knowledge: Duncan Idaho, his warrior sensei; the Mentat Thufir Hawat, his mentor in things tactical and intellectual; and his mother the Bene Gesserit adept Jessica, his guide to the things of the spirit and mystical vision.

There in the primal wilderness he also undergoes spiritual and physical testing and initiations, proves his worth, and gathers loyal followers and allies (the Fremen).

He descends into the Underworld, the place of the dead, the world of spiritual and moral darkness, where he undergoes the ultimate testing, triumphs, and returns to the world of men as the liberating Lightbringer.

Whether this is the main human template myth may be arguable, whether this is even the main Western mythic template somewhat less arguable, but that this generalized tale of The Hero With a Thousand Faces is the structure and inner reality of everything from the New Testament to Tarzan, from *The Stars My Destination* to *Siddartha*, from the various tellings and retellings of the King Arthur

cycle to the myths of Gilgamesh and Barbarossa, to endless samurai epics and much of Shakespeare, as well as DUNE, certainly is not.

So *Dune's* superficially simple and derivative story line is not a cliche but the retelling of one of humanity's deepest and most powerful myths. Deep and powerful because it is the story of ourselves as we would like to be. Our adolescent selves identify with the young Paul because we all, one way or another, feel deprived of our rightful place at the center of the world. We all seek to escape from the usurping forces of repression into the wilderness of self-discovery where we will perform feats that will allow us to return to the seat of power and triumphantly confront the oppressors as the darling of destiny.

On this level, the tale can, and all-too-often has, become a psychologically fascist power fantasy; in fiction, and worse still, in the real world.

And this seductive appeal to egoistic power fantasies is certainly strong in *Dune*, particularly to adolescents, most particularly to male adolescents, which partially explains the popularity of Frank Herbert's novel, and almost entirely explains the popularity of the imitative "science fantasy" that was to follow.

But on a deeper level, the level Joseph Campbell addresses, and a level that is fully present in *Dune*, the ultimate adversary that the true hero (as opposed to the barbarian with a broadsword or the space cadet with a blaster) confronts in the nethermost pit of the moral and spiritual underworld is himself. The egoistic power-tripping self of the superficial level of the story.

And the climactic battle, the ultimate test, is a spiritual and moral one, between these two aspects of the hero; the false and the true, the merely physical and the mystical, the warrior and the man of

knowledge, and what emerges to champion the cause of the people if the hero is successful is not merely an irresistible warrior, but a true Lightbringer, an Enlightened One, a Bodhisattva.

What makes *Dune* such a unique and powerful retelling of the myth of The Hero With A Thousand Faces is that Paul, however imperfectly, understands this very dichotomy early on, and struggles with it, however ambiguously, throughout the bulk of the novel.

And in the end, what can be read as the ultimate triumph on one level can be read as tragedy on the other. And that is the level upon which Paul Atreides, become Muab'dib, become the Kwisatz Haderach and Padishah Emperor, sees it. His prescient vision may make him God-King of this fictional universe, but he cannot escape from the deterministic destiny thereof and the jihad he will bring, the jihad he has spent so much of the novel trying to prevent.

This is what is thematically and mystically and dramatically and psychologically central to DUNE and not "ecology." This is the visionary core of this long, complex, often-discursive, multileveled novel. This is what makes it a literary classic.

And this, in the context of its time, explains why a science fiction novel serialized in eight parts in a genre magazine, first published in small printing by a minor house and then modestly reprinted by a genre publisher in paperback, could become a culturally-influential book in a much wider context and, over time, a best-seller.

The so-called ecological theme of *Dune* does not stand up to serious scrutiny because the ecology of Herbert's fictional Arrakis is extremely simplified and unrealistically schematic. Arrakis is a vast planetary desert, its ecospheres only varying somewhat in degree of dessication, and indeed the main native food chain seems to consist of only two organisms – the tiny ones that produce the raw material of the "spice" and the huge Sandworms which graze upon them and

convert it into the precious melange.

It is the melange, in effect Sandworm droppings, upon which the wealth of Arrakis, and indeed the existence of the novel's interstellar empire, entirely depends. It is the melange for which the Atreides and the Harkonnens contend. It is the melange which is the center of the Fremen culture and religion.

It is the melange which will eventually transform Paul Atreides into the Kwisatz Haderach, the prescient being who can see into levels of reality to which all others are blind. The melange which turns a boy and then a guerrilla leader into a kind of god.

And though melange is referred to throughout the novel as a "spice" and consumed in small quantities as such, that is not what it really is at all.

What it really is is that which could hardly speak its name in clear in the science fiction of the early 1960s, which explains why the book was such a hard sell to publishers in 1964 and 1965 even with the terminological obfuscation. Which also explains why it became a best-seller after the cultural transformations of 1967 once it was published and why it was one of the engines of those transformations.

Melange is not a fictional "spice."

Melange is a fictional psychedelic drug

Its effects are similar to those of LSD or mescaline or peyote.

Only much more powerful.

Dune, therefore, is not primarily a novel thematically centered on ecology. It is centrally a novel exploring chemically enhanced states

of consciousness and their effects not only on individual personality and spirit but on culture.

One of the very first.

And, after all these years, still one of the most profound.

Melange, in even small continuous doses, is addictive, turns the sclera of the eyeballs blue, has milder psychedelic effects than LSD, and, like the peyote of the American southwestern desert, an integrated sacrament of the Native American religion, is thoroughly incorporated into the culture and religion of the Fremen.

On the level of the interstellar culture, it is taken in much stronger doses by the Navigators of the Spacing Guild, who use it to attain extreme states of altered consciousness which allow them to pilot starships through a form of hyperspace, turning them into transhuman beings as part of the existential bargain.

The Bene Geserit female adepts use it for more visionary purposes, and dream of creating and/or finding the "Kwisatz Haderach," a male capable of handling the spice on the highest level, whose consciousness will be freed thereby from conventionally perceived space and time into a kind of Einsteinian four-dimensional viewpoint which will enable him to see "the future" presciently, or, more subtly and profoundly, to surf the geodesics of probability.

Thus Herbert portrays four levels of both the use of psycho-active drugs by a society and the corresponding levels of consciousness. The Fremen incorporate melange as the sacrament of a tribal religion. The Guild Navigators employ it as a pragmatic technological augment. The Bene Gesserit use it in vision quests and mind-melding sessions.

Paul Atreides passes through these three ascending stages on his

way to finally employing the drug to achieve the ultimate level, to become the Kwisatz Haderach, the fully Enlightened One, able to view the conventional realm of space and time from the outside, as Einsteinian four-space, a consciousness rendered therefore prescient up to a point, an Enlightenment that turns out to be both a godlike power and a tragic curse.

All this is set in a culture which is anachronistically archaic in a manner which is both rather too familiar and yet interestingly strange.

Stretching disbelief and contorting technological logic by staging swordfights in a space-going technology capable of using atomic weapons and inflicting an improbable monarchical political system upon it for the purpose of setting a pseudo-medieval action-adventure story on alien planets is hardly Frank Herbert's invention, and these fictional swords-and-spaceships cultures are almost always implicitly Christian and more or less Catholic.

In *Dune* too, we have an Emperor and noble vassals and a hierarchical feudal system with a theocratic underpinning. But it is not Catholic or even Christian.

Although the word "Islam" never even appears in the novel and you have to be rather conversant with the real-world referents to get it, the religious template in DUNE is Islamic, not Christian, more Eastern than Western.

The term "Padishah Emperor" certainly points to Herbert's deliberate decision to do this, since "Shah padi Shah" means "King of Kings" in Farsi, the language of the Islamic Persian Empire.

Nor is it going too far to suppose that the grudge-nursing Fremen, exiled on Arrakis after a long and complex interstellar hegira, are cognates of the minority Shi'ite followers of Ali persecuted and

reviled by dominant Sunni cultures.

And the visionary Bene Gesserit have their similarities to the mystic Sufis, Muslims who claim their sect predates Islam, and who emphasize techniques designed to induce direct mystical experience and insight, rather than ritual, rules, or a belief system.

Why Frank Herbert chose Islam as the religious and mystical underpinning of an interstellar culture that is otherwise based on that of medieval, feudal, Catholic Europe, is perhaps beyond the scope of literary analysis, a choice made somewhere in the deep subconscious regions from which artistic creation arises.

However, one can speculate…

While Islam is generally grouped with Judaism and Christianity, the monotheistic religions out of which it arose, there is one fundamental difference between Islam and its direct predecessors.

Judaism began as a tribal religion centrally concerned with the relationship between the history of the Jews and their God and its Bible was written by diverse hands over a long period of time. Christianity converted Judaism into a proselytizing universalist religion based on the story of one transhuman figure, Jesus Christ, its Bible was written in a much shorter period of time in four alternate versions (not unlike Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*), it is basically a biography of Jesus, and its central concerns are sin, redemption, and morality.

Islam too began as a tribal religion, that of the Arabs, and was transformed into a proselytizing universalist religion, and its holy book, the Koran, is also filled with rules and regulations.

But the Koran, unlike either Testament of the Judeo-Christian Bible, was created by one man, Mohammed, over a very short period of

time in historical terms; directly dictated to him by Allah, if you are a believer, and certainly in the throes of some powerful mystical and visionary experience even if you are not, since Mohammed was an illiterate who had never created a literary work before.

Thus Islam, unlike Judaism or Christianity, but like Buddhism, has as its core one man's mystical and visionary awakening experience. And Mohammed, liked Buddha, made no pretense of being the Godhead, merely (if that can be the word)of directly experiencing it.

The transcendent goal of Christianity is individual immortality in a vaguely described but rather concrete heaven, to be achieved by following the rules. Thus it is basically a religion of morality.

The transcendent goal of Buddhism is the achievement of Nirvana, the ecstatic reintegration of the individual spirit with the universal Godhead from which it arose, to be achieved by meditative techniques. Thus Buddhism is an experiential religion, whose goal is achieving a transhuman state of consciousness.

Islam stands somewhere between. The Koran is as full of moral and legalistic prescriptions as the Bible, but it was written by one man in a state of mystically transcendent consciousness.

And the "heaven" of Islam, salaciously misunderstood by many, including many Muslims, is described as a state of continuous orgasm, which, seen on a mystic level, is a state of transcendent consciousness not unlike the Buddhist Nirvana.

Which perhaps explains why the Sufis, an older and thoroughly experiential religion, aimed entirely at achieving such states by ecstatic dancing, drugs, and other such means of transforming consciousness, could become an aspect of Islam and be generally accepted as such by the mainstream thereof.

And why alcohol, a drug not known for its psychedelic effects, is far more acceptable in Christian cultures than marijuana and hashish, which are far more acceptable in traditional Islamic cultures than alcohol.

Which may explain why Frank Herbert chose to employ Islamic mystical and religious referents in a novel whose central themes are the cultural, psychological, and religions relationships between a psychedelic drug and the societies based upon it, and the stepwise visionary transformation of a young boy's consciousness by the use thereof into the transcendent consciousness of a "Kwisatz Haderach," a being so enlightened that in the end he can even perceive the ironic tragedy of his own prescience.

Which certainly goes a long way towards explaining why *Dune* could not find a major American publisher, inside the science fiction or in the mainstream, in the early 1960s, before there was anything like the Counterculture it helped to create.

And why it eventually became a long-term best-seller after the evolutionary changes in the consciousness of a generation it did so much to catalyze.

Stranger in a Strange Land may have been the model, for better and for worse, for much of the hippie life-style – communes centered around a charismatic guru, an alternate life-style including free sexuality, and in the unfortunate case of the Manson Family, a glib moral rationalization for the discorporation of inconvenient people – but *Dune* did something much more profound.

Reading *Dune* can actually transform your consciousness in a positive manner. It can elevate your spirit. It can take you on a fictional "psychedelic trip," can induce a visionary experience that stays with you, from which, in some small or not so small way, you might emerge as something of a Lightbringer yourself.

A large claim for a science fiction novel?

To be sure.

But if you are reading this, you have the book in your hand, and the opportunity to see for yourself that *Dune* is an empowering novel.

I can only send you on your way to that experience with the testimony of my own, published as a part of my autobiography in the Gale Press C*ontemporary Authors Autobiographical Series*.

Here I describe my decision as a 25-year-old who had published about four stories and who had had a near-death experience in a hospital two years previously to leave New York for California:

“And California, San Francisco in particular, for me, like so many others, was the mythical Golden West towards which Young Men were supposed to go, the land with no winter, North Beach, the Sunset end of the Road, the object of a thousand and one vision quests, the Future itself, somehow, the glorious leap into the Great Unknown.

Appropriately enough, Frank Herbert and about 300 mg of mescaline sent me on my way…

Walking west through the Village night on 4th Street, peaking on mescaline after reading the final installment of the magazine serialization of *Dune*, a powerful meditation on space-time, pre-cognition, and destiny soon to launch a hundred thousand trips, I had a flash-forward of my own.

I would be a famous science fiction writer, I would publish many

stories and novels, and many of the people who were my literary idols, inspirations, and role-models, and former clients, people I had never met, would come to accept me as their equal, as their ally, as their friend.

And my life's mission, would be to take this commercial science fiction genre and turn it into something else somehow, write works that transcended its commercial parameters…that would help to open a new Way…

This is what you're here for. This is why you passed through the fever's fire and didn't die in that hospital bed. This is what you must do. You must go West to meet your future.

The mescaline talking? An overdose of 25-year-old ego? A stoned out ego-tripping wish-fulfillment fantasy?

Call it what you will.

Everything I saw in that timeless Einsteinian moment would come to pass."

That was my description of the prescient *Dune*-inspired vision of my 25-year-old self. Here is the present tense:

"And when I'm really feeling down, I remember a 25-year-old kid stoned on mescaline, walking across 4th Street to the Village, high on *Dune*, and dreaming those crazy prescient dreams…

He was going to be a famous science fiction writer, he would publish many stories and novels, and the many of the people who were his

literary idols, inspirations, and role-models would accept him as their equal, would become his allies, his friends.

And his life's mission would be to take this commercial science fiction genre and turn it into something else somehow, write works that transcended its commercial parameters, works…that would open a new Way…

This is what you're here for.

And so I was. And so I am."

One of the many epithets attached in the novel to Paul Atreides, Muab'dib, Kwisatz Haderach, is "the Opener of the Way."

As witness the above, certainly something Frank Herbert's masterpiece was for me.

The Opener of the Way.

Something that *Dune* will never cease to be.

Source: http://www.sff.net/people/normanspinrad/dune.htm

Alejandro Jodorowsky: Dune, the film you will never see

translated from Métal Hurlant 107, 1985

There is a Hebraic legend which says: “the Messiah will not be a man but one day: the day when all the human beings will be illuminated.” Kabbalistes speak about a conscience collective, cosmic, a species of méta-Universe. And here are what for me all the *Dune* project was.

ENTHUSIASTIC ADMIRATION

To show the process of illumination of a hero, then a people, then a whole planet (which in its turn is the Messiah of the Universe since by giving up its orbit, the holy planet leaves to spread its light throughout all the galaxies)…

I did not want to respect the novel, I wanted to recreate it. For me *Dune* did not belong to Herbert as *Don Quixote* did not belong to Cervantes, nor *Oedipus* with Aeschylus.

There is an artist, only one in the medium of a million other artists, which only once in his life, by a species of divine grace, receives an immortal topic, a MYTH… I say “receives” and not “creates” because the works of art its received in a state of mediumnity

directly of the unconscious collective. Work exceeds the artist and to some extent, it kills it because humanity, by receiving the impact of the Myth, has a major need to erase the individual who received it and transmitted: its individual personality obstructs, stains the purity of the message which, of its base, requires to be anonymous… We know whom created the cathedral of Notre-Dame, neither the Aztec solar calendar, neither the tarot of Marseilles, nor the myth of Don Juan, etc.

One feels that Cervantes gave HIS version of Quixote – of course incomplete – and that we carry in the heart the total character… Christ belongs not to Mark, neither to Luke, neither to Matthew, nor to John… There are many other Gospels known as apocryphal books and there is as many lifes of Christ as there are believers. Each one of us has their own version of *Dune*, its Jessica, their Paul… I felt in enthusiastic admiration towards Herbert and at the same time in conflict (I think that the same thing occurred to him)… He obstructed me… I did not want him as a technical adviser… I did everything to move him away from the project… I had received a version of *Dune* and I wanted to transmit it: the Myth was to give up the literary form and to become Image…

In film, the Duke Leto (father of Paul) would be a man castrated in a ritual combat in the arenas during a bullfight (emblem of the Atreides house being a crowned bull…) Jessica – nun of the Bene Gesserit -, sent as concubine at the Duke to create a girl which would be the mother of a Messiah, becomes so in love with Leto that she decides to jump a chain link and to create a son, Kwisatz Haderach, the saviour. By using her capacities of Bene Gesserit – once that the Duke, insanely in love with her, entrusts her with his sad secret – Jessica is inseminated by a drop of blood of this sterile man… The camera followed (in script) the red drop through the ovaries of the woman and sees its meeting with the ovule where, by a miraculous explosion, it fertilizes it. Paul had been born from a virgin; and not of

the sperm of his father but of his blood…

INSANE EMPEROR

In my version of *Dune*, the Emperor of the galaxy is insane. He lives on an artificial gold planet, in a gold palace built according to not-laws of antilogical. He lives in symbiosis with a robot identical to him. The resemblance is so perfect that the citizens never know if they are facing the man or the machine…

In my version, the spice is a blue drug with spongy consistency filled with a vegetable-animal life endowed with consciousness, the highest level of consciousness. It does not stop taking all kinds of forms, while stirring up unceasingly. The spice continuously produces the creation of the innumerable universes.

The Baron Harkonnen is an immense man of 300 kilograms. he is so fat and heavy that, to move, he must make continuous use of antigravitational bubbles attached at his limbs… His delusion of grandeur does not have limits: he lives in a palace built like a portrait of itself… This immense sculpture is drawn up on a sordid and marshy planet… To enter the palace, one must wait until the colossus opens the mouth and draws a tongue from steel (landing strip…).

At the end of film, the wife of the Count Fenring leaps towards Paul, who has already become Fremen, and she slices his throat. Paul while dying says: “Too late, one cannot kill me… because…

…because, Jessica with the voice of Paul continues, to kill the Kwisatz Haderach, you would have to also have killed me…” And

each Fremen, each Atreides speaks now with the voice of Paul: “I am the collective man. He who shows the way.”

Reality changes quickly. Three columns of light spout out of the planet. They mix. Plunge in the sand of planet: “I am the Earth which awaits the seed!” the spice is desiccated. The ground trembles. Water drops form a pillar surrounded by fire.

Silver filaments emerge from spice. Create a rainbow. They form in a water cloud, produce a red “lava”. Then vapor. Clouds. Rain. Rivers. Grass. Forests. Dune becomes green. A blue ring surrounds planet now. It is divided. It produces more and more rings. Dune is now a world illuminated, which crosses the galaxy, which leaves it, which gives it light – which is Consciousness – to all the universe.

TRUTHS ALCHEMISTS

To conceive this final sequence of transmutation of the matter, I was likely to come into contact with true alchemists… Mysterious beings (one of them seemed to be more than one hundred of years, advanced age which however enabled him to move with an energy of young teenager) which approached me because *Dune* could be a philosopher stone, the stone which changes into gold all other metals… In this sequence, they described what really occurs when they manage to transform, in their alchemical furnaces, the matter…

For the “guerrilla” war that Paul and Fremen carries out against the imperial army, I had been lucky to contact a guerrilla expert from South America… He had fought in Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Center-America… His invaluable experience brought to the scenario a martial reality…

When Jessica becomes the supreme Mother of the Fremen, and must pass through ceremonies of initiation, learn medicine from the wizards and contact other dimensions of reality, I knew the magic medicine of gypsies through Paul Derlon, already deceased… And the ceremonial of the mushrooms hallucinogens and miraculous operations by the Pachita witch, a being who had much more capacities than so-called Filipinos surgeons.

My son Brontis, who was to play Paul, was initiated at nine years of age by a legendary bodyguard – Jean-Pierre Vigneau – to the combat with the knife (of real engagements), karate, the art of archery… He received lessons from an almost true mentat – Michel de Roisin – who had an encyclopaedic brain… I remember to have seen him give to Brontis a lesson on the fable the Cicada and the Ant which lasted more than fifteen days… Through the verses, he described a whole time and its civilizations.

With the production, I crossed the Sahara. I wanted to film *Dune* in Tassili, while facing with the actors, the thousands of extra and the technical teams, torrid heats and the dryness to obtain true lunar landscapes… The Algerian government was very interested by the project…

Once, the Divinity agreed to say to me in a lucid dream: “Your next film must be *Dune*.” I had not read the novel. I lifted myself to a height of six o'clock in the morning and as an alcoholic who awaits the opening of the bar, I waited until someone opens the bookshop to buy the book. I read it of a feature without me stopping for drinking or eating. At midnight exactly, the very same day, I finish the reading. At one minute pass midnight I called from New York, Michel Seydoux in Paris… He would be the first of the seven samurai that it was necessary for me to have for the immense project. Michel was for me a young man (26 years) without

experience in the cinema, but his company Camera One had bought the rights for the Holy Mountain, my last film and had distributed very well it… He had said to me: “I will want to produce a film with you”. I did not know much about him but by an intuition which today surprises me, by seeing it, in spite of his youth, I see in him the largest producer of the time… Why? Mystery… And I was not mistaken. When I say to him that I wanted that he buys the rights for *Dune* and that the film should be international because it would exceed the ten million dollars (fabulous sum for the time: even Hollywood did not believe in science fiction films, *2001* would be unique and unpassable), he did not stumble: “OK. We'll be in Los Angeles in two days to buy the rights.”

He had not read the book… I think that he did not read it yet because the prose of Herbert annoyed him… And one could buy the rights – easily because Hollywood found the book unrealizable with the screen and noncommercial… Michel Seydoux gave me unlimited power and an enormous financial support: I could create my team without economic problem.

3,000 DRAWINGS

I needed a precise script… I wanted to carry out film on paper before filming it… These days all films with special effect are done as that, but at the time this technique was not used. I wanted a draughtsman of comic strips who has the genius and the speed, who can be used as me as a camera and who gives at the same time a visual style… I was by chance with my second warrior: Jean Giraud alias Moebius (at the time he had not made Arzach, nor The Airtight Garage). I say to him: “If you accept this work, you must all give up and leave tomorrow with me to Los Angeles to speak with

Douglas Trumbull (*2001: A Space Odyssey*)". Moebius asked for a few hours of think about it.

The following day, we left for the United States. It would take too a long time to tell… Our collaboration, our meetings in America with the strange ones illuminated and our conversations at seven o'clock in the morning in the small cafe which was in bottom of our workshops and which by "chance" was called Café the Universe. Giraud made 3,000 drawings, all marvelous… The script of *Dune*, thanks to his talent, is a masterpiece. One can see living the characters, one follows the movements of camera. One visualizes cutting, the decorations, the costumes… All that with, each time, some features of pencil… I was behind his shoulders by asking him for the various points of view… By putting in scene the "actors", etc. One filmed…

For the third warrior I required a clever dreamer who can draw the space ships in different way than that of American films:

"I do not want that the man conquers space

In the ships of NASA

These concentration camps of the spirit

These gigantic freezers vomiting the imperialism

These slaughters of plundering and plunder

This arrogance of bronze and thirst

This eunuchoid science

Not the dribble of transistorised and riveted hulks

The divine one

The delirious one

The superb one

CHAOS

UNIVERSAL

I want magical entities, vibrating vehicles

To prolong to be to it abyss

Like fish of a timeless ocean. I want

Jewels, mechanics as perfect as the heart

Womb-ships anterooms

Rebirth into other dimensions

I want whore-ships driven

By the sperm of passionate ejaculations

In an engine of flesh

I want rockets complex and secret,

Humming-bird ornithopters,

Sipping the thousand-year-old nectar of dwarf stars…”

This is why I wrote to Christopher Foss, an English draughtsman who illustrated covers of science fiction books… Like Giraud, he had never thought of the cinema… With a great enthusiasm, he left London and settled in Paris… This artist, with the ships which he produced for *Dune*, marked the cinema. He could produce semi-alive machines which could be metamorphosed with the color of the stones of space… He could produce "thirsty battleships dying century after century in a star desert awaiting the alive body which will fill their empty tanks of subtle secretions of its heart…"

METAPHYSICAL HORROR

After I found Giger, a Swiss painter whose catalogue Dalí had shown me… His art declining, sick, suicidal, brilliant, was perfect to carry out the Harkonnen planet… He made a project of castle and planet which really touched with the metaphysical horror. (Later, he carried out the sets and the monster of *Alien*.)

For the special effects, thanks to the capacity which Michel Seydoux gave me, I was able to refuse Douglas Trumbull… I was unable to swallow his vanity, his airs of business leader and his exorbitant prices. Like a good American, he played to scorn the project and tried to complex us while making us wait while speaking with us at the same time as with ten people on the telephone and finally by showing us superb machines which he tried to improve. Tired of all this comedy, I left to research a young talent. It is said to me that in L.A. it was like looking for a needle in a haystack. I saw in a modest festival of cinema by science fiction amateurs, a film made without means that I found marvelous: *Dark Star*.

I contacted the boy who had made the special effects: Dan O' Bannon. I was almost with a wolf child. Completely out of conventional reality, O'Bannon was for me a real genius. He could not believe that I can entrust a project as significant as *Dune* to him. He was obliged to believe it when he received his plane ticket for Paris. I was not mistaken: Dan O'Bannon wrote later the scenario of *Alien* and a good number of other films with great success.

With Jean-Paul Gibon, who was the executive producer of Camera-One and who liked the project as much as us, we left for England to seek the musician. A vital aspect for me: each planet had its style of music, for example a group as Magma could carry out very well the warlike rates/rhythms of Harkonnens which would be able to crystallize the beauty of planet of sands with its mystery and its relentless forces, the strange symphony of the rings of the giant worms.

Virgin Records accepted us and offered Gong, Mike Oldfield and Tangerine Dream to us. At this time, I say: “And why not Pink Floyd?” The group at that time had such success that almost all regarded that as an unrealizable idea. I had the chance, thanks to my film *El Topo*, known by these musicians. They happily agreed to receive us in London with the *Abbey Road* studios where Beatles had recorded their success. Jean-Paul Gibon was very agreeably surprised that the group would see us. Me, at that time, I had already almost lost my individual conscience. I was the instrument of a miraculous work, where all could be done. *Dune* was not with my service, I were, as the samurai that I had found, with the service of the work. They were recording *Dark Side of the Moon*. While arriving, I did not see a group of large musicians realizing its masterpiece, I see four young people guys devouring steak and chips. Jean-Paul and me, standing in front of them, were to wait until their voracity is satisfied.

In the name of *Dune* I was taken of a holy anger and I left while slamming the door. I wanted artists who can respect a work of such an importance for the human conscience. I think that they did not expect that. Surprised, David Gilmour ran behind us by giving excuses and made us attend the last mixing of its disc. Which ecstasy!… After one attended their last public concert where thousands of fanatics acclaimed them. They wanted to see *The Holy Mountain*. They saw it in Canada. They decided to take part in film by producing an album which was going to be called *Dune* made up of two discs. They came to Paris to discuss the economic part and, after an intense discussion, one arrived at an agreement. Pink Floyd would make almost all the music of film.

100,000 DOLLARS AN HOUR

With the best music on our side, I started to seek the actors. I had seen Charlotte Rampling in Zardoz. I wanted her for Jessica. She refused the role. She wanted at that time to make two or three commercial films, the love of life interesting her more than art. David Carradine came to Paris, interested by the role of Leto.

The actor that I wished for most was Dalí: for the role of the insane Emperor… Which adventure!… The Emperor buffoon, seemed to me it, could be played only by one man of the great delirious personality of Dalí. To New York, with Michel Seydoux and Jean-Paul Gibon, I arrived at our hotel, San Régis and in the hall I see sitted El Salvador Dalí. I guess that it is indelicate to approach him immediately and the following day I called him by telephone. I speak Spanish. Dalí had not see my films but friends spoke to him about them with enthusiasm. He invites me to a very private surrealist exposure and promises to leave me the invitation under the door.

At six o'clock in the evening, I found the invitation for two people. Dalí said to me to be there to 7 O'clock exactly. I arrive with Michel Seydoux five minutes late. At seven hours five, Dalí is not there any more. He came, he got out of its car, made a one minute circuit in the room then left.

A taxi is travelled by and when arriving at the hotel, by chance, I am with Dalí again in the hall. I take an appointment for the following day in the bar of the hotel and I leave.

This night, I chooses to dine at a French restaurant and by chance I find a few steps from of our table is El Salvador Dalí who dines with his friend Amanda Lear, I say to him: “It is the objective chance”. He answers me: “It is more than that. One will speak tomorrow!” the following day, I find him in the bar of the hotel San Régis.

Dalí agrees with much enthusiasm the idea to play the Emperor of the galaxy. He wants to film in Cadaquès and to use as throne a toilet made up of two intersected dolphins. The tails will form the feet and the two open mouths will be used one to receive the “wee”, the other to receive the “excrement”. Dalí thinks that it is of terrible bad taste to mix the “wee” and the “excrement”.

It is said to him that I will need him for seven days… Dalí answers that God made the universe in seven days and that Dalí, while not being less than God, must cost a fortune: 100,000 dollars an hour. Perhaps that while arriving at the set he will decide to film each day more than one hour for the same price.

The only condition is to have the Emperor on the throne scatologic. He does not want to read script: “My ideas are better than yours”. He wants to choose his court among his friends, wants to say what he wants and moreover, at the time to sign the contract, will condescend to make me gift of three ideas that I will have the right

to use or not.

The Daliesque happening will cost us 700,000 dollars. I ask him for time, one night, to make a decision and I leave. That night, I tear off a page of a book on the tarot; there is a reproduced card: Hanged Man. I write a letter to him by saying to him that the film cannot pay him 700 000 dollars, but which I will try to convince my producer to use him three days for 300,000 dollars.

The following day, I send the letter to Dalí. He will give us his response in Paris.

In Paris, Dalí invites us by telephone to meet it with the Meurice hotel. There is the surprise of not being alone with him: there is a score of people, merchants, models, fine young men, a lady which one calls the King and who is virile, an enormous Dutchwoman who will pose so that Dalí combs her sex, a character who claims to be the grandson of the pétomane (the man which, in 1900, played in the music-halls, and whom Dalí says to us that he did with his bottom what Tino Rossi could not do with his throat).

I do not have the chance of speaking with the painter because he takes us along to a dinner and it is in this dinner that Dalí wants to speak to me about film. In way, I prepare a small questionnaire: how does an Emperor die? How is his palace? How does he get dressed? Etc.

In the festival where I find Mick Jagger, Nathalie Delon, Johnny Hallyday and other celebrities, Dalí shows its enthusiasm for the role of the Emperor and when I give him my questionnaire while saying to him: “I came prepared”. It answers me: “Me also”. From a pocket he pulls the drawing of the toilet made with the two dolphins: “It is completely necessary to see the Emperor making wee and excrement”. I ask to him whether it is ready to show his sex and his anus and he say to me that not and that he would like to be doubled,

that he wants only that he is seen sitted.

Dalí known as to regard my card as a contract. He was touched by the image of the Hanged Man and said: “I see the Hanged Man with his hair like roots in the ground and outgoing, by the bottom, a column of sh*t with a capital linking it with the sky”. A few days later, the grandson of the pétomane invites us to give us appointment in Barcelona. But Dalí calls me before again inviting me to lunch and speak about his role. He does not want to be directed (put in scene). He wants to do what he wants. I ask him: “If I were a rich person owner and that I said to paint me what you would like yourself, but in the octagonal shape of table, you would do it? ”

Dalí : “Yes.”

Me: “Then, it is possible to work together, I will direct you while asking you questions (the form) and you will answer me as you want with actions.”

AMANDA LEAR

Dalí accepts. Me, I think that the battle will be formidable. It will be necessary that I find questions which have only one answer. And, it will be necessary that I envisage his answers as failures.

For example, if I ask how will be equipped the Emperor, it is quite possible that he answers me: “In the 20 century, Dalí will be

regarded as God, as today is Christ. The Padishah Emperor will be equipped like Dalí."

If I ask him how will be his palace, he could answer me: "Like a reproduction of the old station of Perpignan." If he gives me these two answers, it could kill *Dune* and it should be said to him that there is a limit: Dalí cannot interpret Dalí.

The idea of a similar play authentically seems to me surrealist and I am more than ever ready to work with the painter without taking account of the words of Amanda Lear who, in an aside with the dinner, tempted by the idea to play Irulan, the daughter of the emperor, says to me that the Master is a saboteur by masochism, that finally he always likes the things which fail.

A screenplay writer who made a film for the TV with Dalí said to me that he is unpredictable up to the point to choosing to be filmed in obscure corners, although have spent all the day to light sets, he refuses at the last second to put his feet there.

That gives me the idea to light the day of filming with Dalí not only the set, but also the corridors, the toilets, the roofs, all. If I do not have dark corners, this battle will be gained. It says to me that for him, my card with the image of the Hanged Man is his contract.

To Barcelona, we arrives one late hour. Before going to see him, I decides to face the problem by telephone. I speak with the descendant about the pétomane: "Listen to Sir, do not waste time, we cannot offer Dalí 300,000 dollars. We have 150,000 dollars. If he is not interested, I set out again to Paris. If the business interests him, call us in ten minutes."

At the end of ten minutes, the small pétomane calls us: "Come, Dalí awaits you."

Dalí, this time, is relatively alone. Amanda Lear is there with two secretaries. who starts by playfully scorning him, saying: “Dalí is like a taxi, as time passes the more expensive it is, and you, as time passes, the less you want to pay.” I have finally time to introduce Jean-Paul Gibon to him who will defend the interests of Michel Seydoux. I try to reason him. It is difficult and for us almost impossible to film in Cadaquès, that must be done in Paris.

For 150,000 dollars, I want three days and not an hour and half of filming. I would like to also make a polyethylene puppet, his counterpart, to use it like his double in film. Dalí is put in anger: “I will have you like rats! I will film in Paris, but the set will cost you more than the landscapes of Cadaquès and the framework of my museum. Dalí costs 100,000 dollars the hour!”

He is calmed and agreed to the idea of being reproduced out of plastic, if after film I give this sculpture to his museum. I decide to definitively finish the contract the following day. I discuss it with Jean-Paul Gibon and I conclude that it is impossible to haggle with Dalí. I meditate lengthily and I make this final decision: I reduce the role of Dalí to a page and half of script. I accept his price, 100,000 dollars the hour, but I take it only for only one hour. The remainder, I will film it with his double robot. Dalí cannot be allowed either to reconsider its price. I went to see him. I give him the small page and half, and Dalí accepts the proposal because his honor is secure. He will be the most expensive paid actor in the history of cinema. He will earn more than Greta Garbo.

Dalí, with enthusiasm, shows me his bed with the sculpture of dolphin. A workman is already there taking the design of the dolphin to make the toilet.

As much for Dalí as for me, the tarot card of the Hanged Man, on which I wrote some words acted as contract.

Dalí likes the aristocracy and like any man of noble spirit, he respects his word.

With the signature of the contract, I celebrate with a great dinner where Dalí is named Chevalier of Crayfish. He makes me sit by his side and, likewise, he makes sit Pasolini. During all the dinner, he introduces food on the end of his fingers into the mouth of Pasolini.

I worry because I want to be the first to have Dalí as actor and I was astonished to discover with us another director.

Amanda Lear says to me: “You should not worry. Pasolini is only here to request the permission to use a tableau of Dalí for the poster of his film Les Cent-Vingt Journées de Sodome. Dalí requires 100,000 dollars from him. Dalí likes that one fights for him.”

NOT ENOUGH HOLLYWOOD

Me, I liked to fight for *Dune*. Almost all the battles were won, but the war was lost. The project was sabotaged in Hollywood. It was French and not American. Its message was not “enough Hollywood.” There were intrigues, plundering. The story-board circulated among all the large studios. Later, the visual aspect of *Star Wars* resembled our style. To make *Alien*, they invited Moebius, Foss, Giger, O'Bannon, etc. The project announced to American the possibility of carrying out science fiction films to large spectacle and out of the scientific rigor of *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

The *Dune* project changed our life. When it was over, O'Bannon entered a psychiatric hospital. Afterwards, he returned to the fight with rage and wrote twelve scripts which were refused. The

thirteenth one was *Alien*.

Like him, all those who took part in the rise and fall of the *Dune* project learned how to fall one and one thousand times with savage obstinacy until learning how to stand. I remember my old father who, while dying happy, said to me: “My son, in my life, I triumphed because I learned how to fail.”

Translated from the supplement “DUNE LE FILM QUE VOUS NE VERREZ JAMAIS” in Métal Hurlant 107.

Source: http://www.duneinfo.com/unseen/jodorowsky

Links

Additional Material

-Tim O'Reilly - Frank Herbert (full book)

-Jorodowsky's Dune (documentary)

Biography / Interview Lists

-Encyclopaedia Fantastyki: Frank Herbert

-The Augustry: The Frank Herbert Master Post

Interviews

-The Almost Undeleted: Frank Herbert Interviews

-Jacurutu: Frank Herbert Interviews

-Facebook: Secrets of Dune